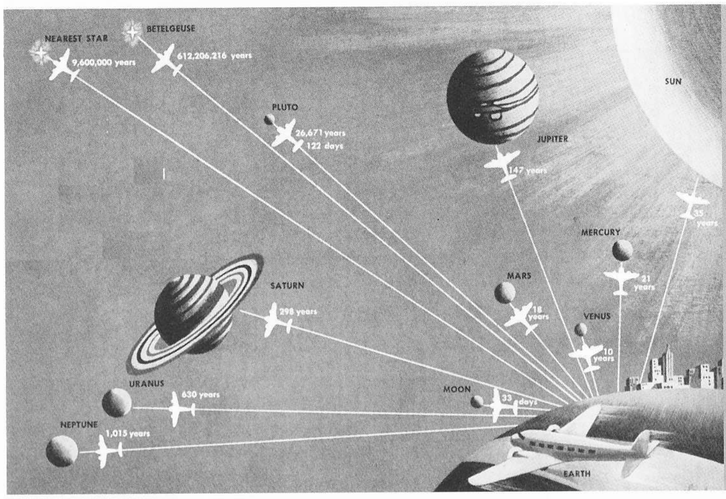
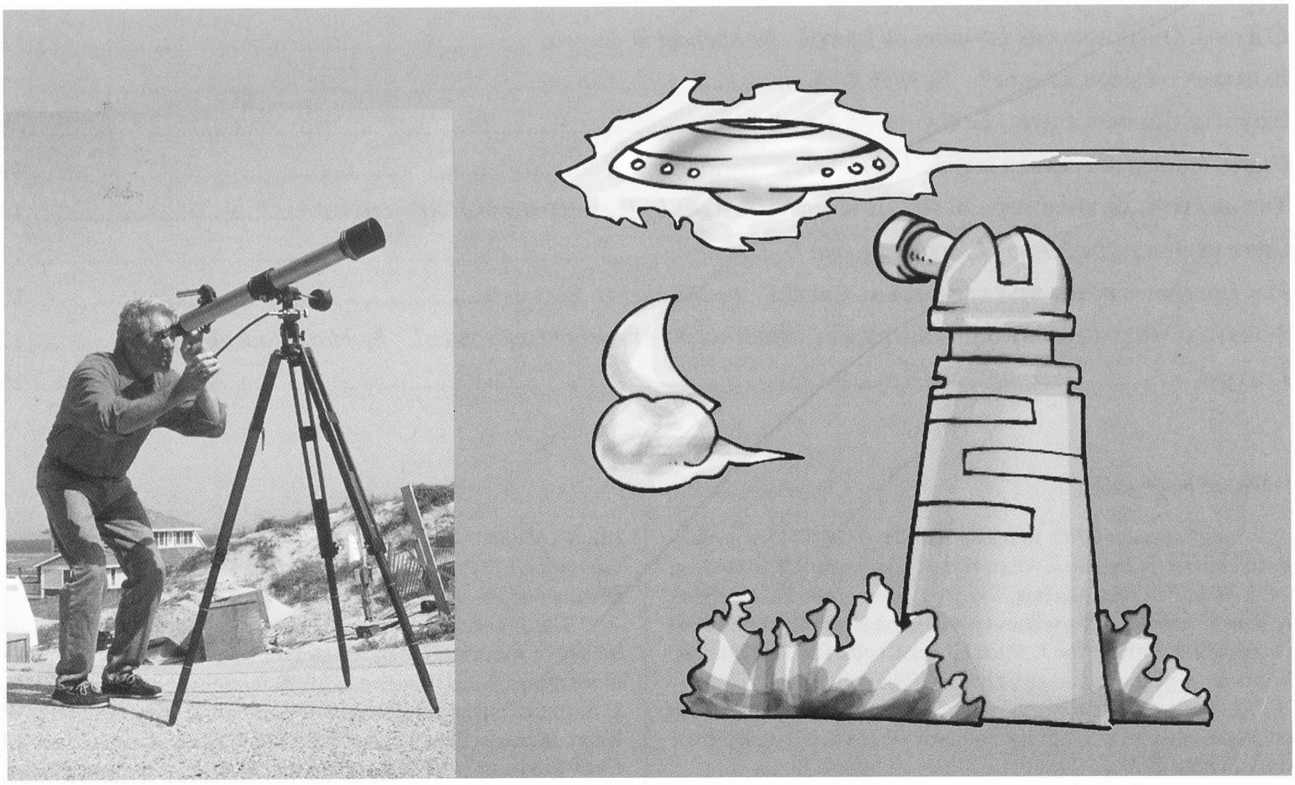
IUR

International UFO Reporter

Volume 30, Number 3


NEAREST STAR
9,600,000 years
BETELGEUSE
612,206,216 years
PLUTO
26,671 years
122 days
JUPITER
147 years
SUN
35 years
MERCURY
21 years
MARS
18 years
VENUS
10 years
SATURN
298 years
URANUS
630 years
MOON
33 days
NEPTUNE
1,015 years
EARTH

SPECULATION AND SURVEILLANCE



UFO SIGHTINGS BY SCIENTISTS

INTERNATIONAL UFO REPORTER

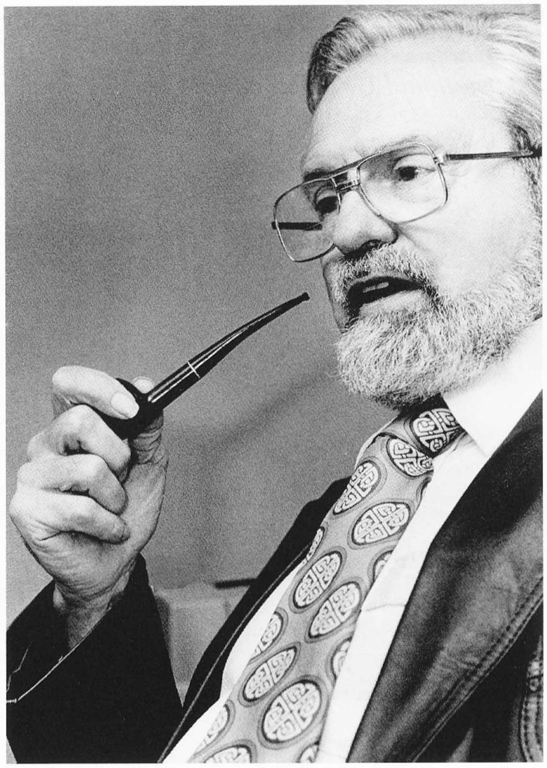
Editors:
Jerome Clark
George M. Eberhart
Mark Rodeghier

Contributing Editors:
Bill Chalker
Richard F. Haines
Kevin D. Randle
Jenny Randles
Chris Rutkowski

Web site:
www.cufos.org

E-mail:
Infocenter@cufos.org

Answering machine:
(773) 271-3611



J. Allen Hynek
1910-1986

COLONEL ODELL AND THE INVASION OF EARTH *by Michael D. Swords* 3

PARANOIA OR SURVEILLANCE? *by Nick Redfern* 7

PALOMAR GARDENS CAFÉ *by George M. Eberhart* 9

CLOUD CIGARS: A FURTHER LOOK *by Herbert S. Taylor* 10

THE AMATEUR ASTRONOMER AND THE UFO PHENOMENON *by Gert Herb and J. Allen Hynek* 14

BOOK REVIEWS *by Jerome Clark and Kevin D. Randle* 17

FUN AND GAMES IN THE DESERT NEAR LAS CRUCES *by Michael D. Swords* 20

SCIENTISTS WOULD INVESTIGATE SIGHTINGS BY OTHER SCIENTISTS—WOULDN'T THEY? *by Mark Rodeghier* 22

LETTERS 25

Published in May 2006.

International UFO Reporter (ISSN 0720-174X) is published quarterly by the J. Allen Hynek Center for UFO Studies, 2457 West Peterson Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60659. All rights reserved. Reproduction without permission is strictly prohibited. Copyright © 2006 by the J. Allen Hynek Center for UFO Studies. Third-class postage paid at Chicago, Illinois.

Advertisements accepted for publication in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the viewpoints of the J. Allen Hynek Center for UFO Studies.

Address all article submissions, letters to the editor, and other editorial correspondence to *International UFO Reporter*, Center for UFO Studies, 2457 West Peterson Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60659. Address all subscription correspondence to *International UFO Reporter*, 2457 West Peterson Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60659.

The *International UFO Reporter* is a benefit publication mailed to Associates of the Center for a contribution of $25.00 or more. Foreign Associates add $5.00 for delivery. All amounts in U.S. funds. Other publications also available for contributors of larger amounts. For details, write to the J. Allen Hynek Center for UFO Studies, 2457 West Peterson Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60659, USA.

Postmaster: Send Form 3579 to CUFOS, 2457 West Peterson Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60659.

COLONEL ODELL AND THE INVASION OF EARTH

BY MICHAEL D. SWORDS

It was early in 1953. Donald Keyhoe was nearing the end of half a year of amazing cooperation from U.S. Air Force Pentagon insiders with him on the problem of UFOs. But the UFO-sympathetic military UFO officer, Maj. Dewey Fournet, had just retired, and his colleague, the UFO-friendly information desk official, Al Chop, was also about to leave that post. Unknown to Keyhoe, the CIA's Robertson Panel had recently completed its business, and the internal Pentagon war over how to handle UFO information properly had been decided in favor of debunking and ridicule.

Of course, the Robertson Panel decision didn't immediately sweep through all the services, or even the intelligence officers at the Pentagon. There is plenty of evidence that many of them were in disagreement with the new attitudes and policies. One of these officers appears to have been Col. William C. Odell.

In one of Keyhoe's last meetings with Chop, he was handed an article prepared by Odell for publication in the popular press. Its title was provocative: "Planet Earth—Host to Extraterrestrial Life." Chop gave it to Keyhoe with the background that many persons on his side of the Pentagon UFO war were not backing down and that they felt more information should be made available to the public. Keyhoe scanned the pages of the article. It was all about civilizations crossing space in search of new planets to live on once their own was failing for some reason. Keyhoe's mind was boggled. What was *this*? Why an Air Force colonel in intelligence? How did this get released?

Chop calmly told him that the Air Force could not refuse an officer's freedom to present personal opinions on matters that were not defined as issues of national security. Odell could write about anything he wanted to, but he couldn't use his Air Force affiliation, as that could cause too much confusion (and so his affiliation could not be listed if the article was published). Keyhoe was still reeling. He protested that newsmen would see right through that in seconds. Chop merely replied, "Security review passed it. That's all I know." He then asked Keyhoe to show the draft to his editors, at *True* or anywhere else he wished. Obviously, Odell had asked Chop to handle it this way.

Michael D. Swords is professor emeritus of the Environmental Institute, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo.

Keyhoe showed the article to the editors at *True* (actually chief editor Ken Purdy was away, and John DuBarry stood in for him), but everyone was nervous about it, sensing something odd was going on in the Pentagon and not wanting to run the piece without Odell's rank and position. So the article never ran, and Keyhoe only mentioned its contents briefly, within much commentary on the larger social context, at the end of his blockbuster book, *Flying Saucers from Outer Space* (1953).

Although Keyhoe didn't make a copy of the article before he gave it back to Chop, he did make notes, which makes it possible for me to attempt to reconstruct Odell's original words. To do so, I'm going to use this approach:

1. Take the points that Keyhoe outlined in his four pages of notes in the order that they come.
2. Make understandable sentences out of the fragmented parts and correct typos.
3. Add some bridge commentary of my own to give the article some readable flow, without adding any unintended comments. I'll identify my words by using brackets.
4. Add some explanatory notes when I intuit that the text needs it. These will also be in brackets.

So, let's give it a try. Here's my best shot at Odell's article.

PLANET EARTH: HOST TO EXTRATERRESTRIAL LIFE

When we look up at the skies on a clear night, the unaided human eye can see at most about 5,000 points of light in the heavens. [But our universe is much vaster than that. Some of these points of light are galaxies, and countless more are visible with the aid of a telescope.] In each complete galaxy there are approximately 40 million unseen stars for each one visible to the eye.

In our age, man is near to venturing out into our solar system, and beyond it into our galaxy. [This endeavor may well be of great importance to us]. In some distant time, if man *doesn't* travel in space, the race on Earth will perish, either because the planet has cooled into a permanent ice age, or is consumed in the last violent moments of the Sun.

In these circumstances, the only answer for an advanced civilization to survive would be: Exodus. [But where would we go?]

For ourselves, "life as we know it," or for a type of life form very near our own, we must have certain environmental conditions in an approximate range of temperature, oxygen density, water availability, and atmospheric pressure. [Our solar system doesn't hold much promise in these regards.]

NEARBY LIFE FORMS

Our own Moon varies in temperature from –150° C. to 100° C. [More accurately, it varies from –233° C. to 123° C., with a mean of –23° C.] It lacks atmosphere and so heat from the Sun is not retained. When the Sun sets on the lunar surface, a drop of 200° C. is common. With a complete lack of water and atmosphere, and extremely variable temperatures, there is probably little hope for the sustaining of any human form of life.

On Mars, the temperature band [range] would permit life on the lower end of the Earth's scale. [Temperatures on Mars range from –140° C. to 20° C., with a mean of –63° C.] Humans could live there under artificial conditions. But there are only traces of oxygen [0.13%], an atmospheric pressure that is very small [less than one-tenth of the Earth's], and a feeble gravity [about one-third of Earth's]. Whatever oxygen may be produced by low forms of plant life and isn't used by them is lost to space because of the low gravitational pull. There are "snow caps" at the Martian poles. These are probably carbon dioxide snow.

As to Venus, the temperature falls from a hot 100° C. in the lower layers of the atmosphere to about –25° C. in the outermost stratum. [We now know the mean surface temperature of Venus is 464° C., and the temperature at its cloud tops is approximately –45° C.] The Venusian atmosphere is dense, at least twice that of Earth's. [Atmospheric pressure at the surface is about 90 times that of Earth.] It apparently lacks oxygen and may also lack water. [Oxygen has not been detected, but there is about 0.002% water vapor, with 96.5% of the atmosphere carbon dioxide.] Some liquid matter is present. [The only liquid is lava.] The planet is perpetually surrounded by great depths of clouds. Life could exist there, and may have to breathe gases other than oxygen.

Though not necessarily speaking of Venus, some scientists have speculated that life on other planets might breathe fluorine, chlorine, ammonia, or hydrogen fluoride, rather than our earth-based mixture where plants take in carbon dioxide and breathe out oxygen. If an advanced civilization could have developed on the surface of Venus, their progress could have been retarded as, perhaps, the dense, foggy atmosphere would preclude astronomy.

[As for the other planets, prospects for a haven for advanced life are poorer yet.] At Mercury, the temperature ranges far beyond our scale for life: much too hot on one side, and much too cold on the other. The other five planets are deep in a cold temperature range unsuitable for life. Jupiter has a constant –130° C. temperature. It is a tremendous planet, completely enveloped in the wrong type of atmosphere for human life. Saturn, like Jupiter, is extremely cold, with a temperature remaining at –150° C. Uranus is buried under a frigid blanket of –170° C. Neptune and Pluto stay around –200°C. The asteroids, so numerous that they are not all named, are too small to create life. Their gravities are so minute that they cannot retain any atmosphere. If all of this is so, then Man must ultimately look to the stars for his haven.

In our solar system, one of the nine planets has intelligent life. If this ratio holds elsewhere, there would be many havens in our galaxy. The same conditions that created Earth must have occurred elsewhere. New suns and new worlds are still being created. Some suitable orbiting planets in other solar systems may be older, some younger. And, even if other life would not be found in our own galaxy, it is probable elsewhere. There is almost a mathematical certainty that somewhere in space, Earth has a twin.

Earth's twin will not be an identical one, in the sense of its being born at the same time, but rather in the sense that conditions for life have developed there and that life is present and evolving. In fact, our Earth could be one of a family of life-supporting planets in the Universe. Some of our sister planets, capable of sustaining life, would be older than ours. Others would be younger. There may be enough of this breed of planet that one could see life forms developing through all the stages that occurred here. Some planets may be on the doorstep of human development. Others may be further along, as we are today. Still others will be much older, so much further advanced that they are on the verge of exodus from their planet, as it approaches that stage of its inevitable destruction. These beings may have attained space travel. They may have already explored their own stellar system. They may overcome the technical and practical restrictions and are preparing for the abandonment of their planet. They may be seeking a younger, more suitable planet on which to live and perpetuate their race.

[An aside: Judging by the arrows and lines he scratched on the above paragraph, Keyhoe was wowed by it.]

There are some races in the Universe that will never have the opportunity to meet each other. Some races will die through wars on their planet, through lack of technological development, or through interplanetary wars within their own stellar system.

For all we know, planets may be the rule rather than the exception. Recent observations of the binary stars 61 Cygni [11.4 light years distant] and 70 Ophiuchi [16.6 light years away] have indicated that nonluminous bodies of almost planetary size are associated with both stars. There may be planets orbiting about the score or so stars that lie within a dozen light years of our own sun. At this time, modern telescopes are incapable of differentiating planets from their mother suns, as, in comparison, they are much too small and their reflected light is much too dim to be seen by even our most powerful telescopes.

[Odell is referring in the above paragraph to events in 1942–1943 when astronomers announced that careful examination of a long record of observations of these two star systems had indicated the presence of a dark planetary body tugging gravitationally at the outer of the two stars in the systems. This claim was considered reasonable through the 1940s and 1950s and was a foundation stone of a new acceptance by astronomers of the idea that planets were probably common. Military writers, though not referring to these two systems, spoke of extraterrestrial planets in both the Project Sign and Saucer reports. Odell seems well read on these matters.]

EXTRATERRESTRIALS AMONG US?

We wonder how other races would ever come to know that intelligent life existed on Earth. Recent reports of unusual phenomena in our atmosphere [UFOs] have reopened the suspicion that travelers from outer space may be reconnoitering Earth. Numerous men of scientific background have flatly opened their technical reputations to censure by stating that these uncommon sightings are of extraterrestrial origin. These include engineers and scientists from all fields and all nations.

[An amazingly strong and enthusiastic statement by an Air Force officer at the Pentagon. He could have been referring to the Navy balloon project wizards, like Charles B. Moore, Cmdr. Robert McLaughlin, J. J. Kaliszewski, and others; or to the Project Sign boys; or to Prof. Hermann Oberth, who was just making his views known in Germany—and he was probably influenced by all of them, and more.]

Granted that super intelligences on a planet in another solar system have mastered the problems of interstellar travel and are looking for a suitable planet for a second home, why would Earth be singled out from other planets in space for reconnaissance? [Keyhoe was also impressed by this paragraph and put it in the book.]

Some believe that the explosion of an atomic bomb on this planet could be noticed from outer space. This is doubtful. Such an explosion might be seen from the Moon, or maybe from somewhat greater distances if Earth was under observation at that precise moment. But to be seen on a planet light years away seems remote. Such an event from astronomical distances might draw no more attention than phenomena associated with sunspots or a large meteor hitting a planet. One would need tremendous telescopes to notice such an event.

But, for some years, electromagnetic emanations from outside our atmosphere have been received by radios here on the surface. Some refer to this as "cosmic static." These emanations originate from somewhere in space. I do not raise this as support for a theory of extraterrestrial races (though it may lend weight to such a theory), but to point out the ability of space to transmit radiant energy. Most of our own radio waves are trapped and reflected by atmospheric layers high above Earth. But some do escape our atmosphere with less interference. Not long ago, we transmitted radar signals to and received echoes back from the Moon. [This was Project Diana, conducted on January 10, 1946.] The ether of space is a carrier of energy. It is always waiting to transmit such waves with the speed of light.

Radio transmissions of fairly high energy have been coming from stations on Earth for perhaps 20 years. Throughout the past generation, therefore, these transmissions have left this planet and sped through space with the speed of light. By now they could have been intercepted by powerful and delicate devices in the hands of an advanced race on a distant planet. If we, with our relatively amateurish attempts at technology, know principles of electronic detection and transfixing, then such an advanced race would as well. They would have no difficulty in detecting our transmissions, monitoring them, and locating their source in space.

If the so-called "flying saucers" are craft of extraterrestrial origin whose engineers are capable of monitoring radio transmissions and undertaking space travel, why would they have ventured near to our planet only during the last five years? In addition to this question, are there solar systems near enough to receive, decipher, and elect to investigate our transmissions at their source? It may well be so.

To make interstellar travel practical, it must be at tremendous speed, approaching the speed of light. Granting this, the location of the investigating race in outer space must be no more than 10 or 12 light years away (the distance which gives our signal 10 or so years to reach them, then perhaps two years for monitoring, deciphering, and study, and another 10 years for space travel to reach us). So, given 20 (or so) years, the super-intelligent race should be located within a locus of points not greater than 10±2 light years distant.

It has already been mentioned that 61 Cygni and 70 Ophiuchi are in this sphere. [Despite the current progress in extrasolar planet detection, no bodies have been detected around these two stars.] There are 15 other suns within 12 light years of our own. [Actually, 20 are now known within that distance.] Each one of these stars is bigger or brighter than the Sun. This might lead to the idea that such a star might support a planetary system equal to or greater than our own. From any of these, an outer space race could have received our radiant signals and have had time to respond with an exploration as described.

It does seem strange that 90% of these sightings occur in the Western Hemisphere, and most of these in the United States. It is difficult to believe that an interstellar space expedition would ignore the remaining land area of the globe. Our planet, because of its thick atmosphere and amount of water vapor, is always screened from outside observation by large patches of cloud. Only over arid regions or deserts does the vapor screen dissipate and leave a clear view of large areas of the Earth's surface. Of those, the vast stretches of the Sahara and Gobi deserts have extra-sparse habitation. The nomads there have little education.

The arid areas of the American Southwest are little different in climate but are populated by modern intellectual men. Such a region would speak well for a possible point of contact with Earth Man. [Hmmm…where did that Roswell thing occur, again?]

One might also reason that an advanced extraterrestrial race, upon a thorough study of our radio transmissions, might become attracted by the humanitarian aspect of Americanism. [Oh for the innocent idealism of the 50s, eh?] That ideology might be said to more closely approach the way of life on a higher plane. But [such an analysis] takes more than a pinch of salt.

This, however, leads to a kindred thought: A study of our beamed radio transmissions over a period of years might cause extraterrestrial intelligences to elect to survey our planet rather than abruptly descend upon it. This study of countless broadcasts might cause another race to wonder if Earth is a suitable place to visit after all. They might come to believe that their search should continue elsewhere, hoping to find other races in the Universe, whose way of life more closely dovetails with their own, rather than the barbaric existence evident on Earth.

Thus ends Keyhoe's notes and my attempt to reconstruct Odell's essay. Now some commentary on the essay.

Donald Keyhoe was exceptionally boggled by this essay, and even more so by the simple fact that it had gotten past the Pentagon's censors. He dedicated the climactic chapter-and-a-half of his book to ruminations about the hypothesis of extraterrestrial colonization and to the puzzlement over what the heck was going on in the Pentagon. Keyhoe's intuition (which he had expressed many times in both *The Flying Saucers are Real* and *Flying Saucers from Outer Space*) that a deep and even violently emotional division existed inside USAF intelligence was true. Colonel Odell's article was just one spectacular example of a high-ranking officer who took UFOs and the extraterrestrial hypothesis very seriously. The fact that the piece passed USAF security review is surely another example of that seriousness (everyone in the "UFO chain" from Al Chop to Maj. Dewey Fournet to Col. William Adams to Col. Weldon Smith were strongly pro-UFO and would have openly countenanced Odell's views). The timing of the article, just after the CIA panel had angered the pro-UFO wing with its bully policy of ridiculing the subject, plus the quashing of the release of the Tremonton, Utah, film, may well have been seen by the pro-UFO wing as part of a last ditch effort to head off the new policy.

I'm still with Keyhoe here, though. I'm still amazed that the essay snuck out. What that says to me is that the opinion of many of my UFO colleagues, that the intelligence community was so sharp and organized that it could manage anything at any level of detail so slickly, is just bunk. If something could be held very tightly among just a few hands, OK, maybe. But something like UFOs, no way. The subject was too big and the Pentagon too massive to keep worms from crawling out of their designated cans at regular intervals. Odell's worm got out, but scared and uncertain editors let it crawl back in, and the rest of us never saw it.

Keyhoe and his friend Jim Riordan, a retired military pilot, did see it, and neither of them liked the visions that the essay brought to their minds. Both of them insisted to one another that extraterrestrial invasion was not what was being set up by this UFO survey of Earth that seemed to be going on. But, irritatingly the idea embedded in Odell's piece nagged. Riordan finally said, "It's still a hellish idea. Even though I don't believe it, I wish that I hadn't heard it." They actually *had* already heard it, though, in another form:

> No one would have believed, in the last years of the nineteenth century, that human affairs were being watched keenly and closely by intelligences greater than man's and yet as mortal as his own; that as men busied themselves about their affairs they were scrutinized and studied, perhaps almost as narrowly as a man with a microscope might scrutinize the transient creatures that swarm and multiply in a drop of water. With infinite complacency mean went to and fro over this globe about their little affairs, serene in their assurance of their empire over matter. It is possible that the infusoria under the microscope do the same. No one gave a thought to the older worlds of space as sources of human danger, or thought of them only to dismiss the idea of life upon them as impossible or improbable. It is curious to recall some of the mental habits of those departed days. At most, terrestrial men fancied there might be other men upon Mars, perhaps inferior to themselves and ready to welcome a missionary enterprise. Yet, across the gulf of space, minds that are to our minds as ours are to those of the beasts that perish, intellects vast and cool and unsympathetic, regarded this earth with envious eyes, and slowly and surely drew their plans against us. And early in the twentieth century came the great disillusionment.

As Riordan and Keyhoe grimaced over Odell's essay in early 1953, Hollywood's release of *The War of the Worlds,* based on H. G. Wells's 1898 novel, was only weeks away. ✦

OWN ALL OF NICAP's U.F.O. INVESTIGATORS

CUFOS now has available a CD-ROM containing all of the issues of the prestigious *U.F.O. Investigator,* published by the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena from July 1957 to June 1980. Additional NICAP material from the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s is also included. To get your copy, send $50 (includes both U.S. and overseas postage) to:

CUFOS
2457 W. Peterson
Chicago, IL 60659

PARANOIA OR SURVEILLANCE?

BY NICK REDFERN

When details of the National Security Agency's (NSA) domestic surveillance program surfaced late in 2005, a storm of protest and controversy followed. But such spying activity is nothing new. Coincidentally, as the world's media were reporting the story about the NSA, I was putting the final touches to my latest book, *On the Trail of the Saucer Spies: UFOs and Government Surveillance.* That book addresses the issue of official, widespread surveillance of American and British citizens who are, or were, engaged in UFO research. In Britain, in several instances, that surveillance was directly linked to the activities of the British equivalent of the NSA—the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), situated in the city of Cheltenham.

In 1997, in my first book, *A Covert Agenda: The British Government's UFO Top Secrets Exposed*, I documented the collection and study of UFO data by staff at GCHQ. Though GCHQ has consistently denied having any links to the UFO subject, the trail of evidence strongly suggests otherwise.

Established one year after the Allied victory over Nazi Germany in the Second World War, GCHQ supplies British agencies and departments, civilian and military, with Signals Intelligence–based data. This is in accordance with the mandate of the British government's Joint Intelligence Committee, the function of which is to produce a weekly survey on various aspects of intelligence operations for senior sources within officialdom. This survey is called the Red Book.

GCHQ is known to obtain much of its Signal Intelligence material from intercepted overseas communications. For this purpose, it controls the Composite Signals Organization, which operates from locations both within the borders of Britain and abroad. In 1947, the governments of a number of nations—specifically the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia—signed the UKUSA Agreement, designed to allow the aforementioned nations access to a variety of Signals Intelligence data for mutual use.

It is also a matter of official record that GCHQ's collection and study of Signals Intelligence data is undertaken hand-in-glove with the NSA. From declassified Freedom of Information Act releases, we know that NSA's headquarters at Fort George G. Meade, Maryland, holds files of Signal Intelligence–derived UFO data. Given that fact, it seems most unlikely that elements of GCHQ would never be exposed to similar material.

But can we prove as much? Yes. Not only that: The one case that more than any other demonstrates direct interest in the UFO puzzle on the part of GCHQ also reveals widespread official surveillance of the prime investigator of the case, a man named Robin Cole.

By the mid-1990s, Cole, a lifelong Cheltenham resident who was at the time the head of a UFO research group named Circular Forum, had cultivated a number of sources who worked at GCHQ and had guardedly provided him with a wealth of data on UFOs. These included information on radar-visual encounters reported by Royal Air Force personnel in the early 1950s; evidence that GCHQ studied gun-camera footage of UFOs taken by British military pilots in the late 1950s; the fact that GCHQ's library held a large number of published books on UFOs; and revelations to the effect that, as late as 1996, GCHQ analysts were still monitoring UFO encounters when they involved the military.

One particular GCHQ department implicated in UFO investigations, Cole learned, was known as the Oakley Installation, which is home to two impressive structures the staff has nicknamed the Pleasure Dome and the Barn. Both were constructed with the benefit of a multimillion-pound budget.

According to Cole, "The Pleasure Dome has acquired its nickname because the higher your status, the higher up you work inside the building, thus giving the employee a more panoramic view across Cheltenham and creating a nicer environment to work in. The Barn covers sixteen and a half thousand square feet and comprises two floors on the south and three on the north. This contains so many computers that a special chiller unit was built to keep them all cool. Both sites are as big underground as they are above ground, as far as square working footage is concerned, with enough

---

Nick Redfern is a British-born freelance journalist who currently lives in Texas. He has written books on cryptozoology and ufology, the most recent being On the Trail of the Saucer Spies *(Anomalist, 2006).*

room at the [nearby] Benhall site—known to the employees as the Funny Farm—that lorries can be driven in to unload equipment and supplies, thus allowing both to remain in complete operation should war break out."

In 1997, Cole wrote a detailed, privately published report on his discoveries, titled "GCHQ and the UFO Cover-Up." Shortly after its appearance Cole was interviewed on a British television news program, something that set a strange series of events in motion. As Cole described the situation:

"Just after my report was published, I was interviewed with regard to its contents by Central Television. They picked up on it straight away and did a damned good piece which was shown on both the evening and late-night shows. Well, the following morning the phone rang. 'Mr. Cole?' said a voice. . . . 'This is Detective Sergeant Tim Camp from Cheltenham CID [Criminal Investigation Department of the British Police Force]. Can we come and have a chat with you, please?'

"Well, I was obviously a bit stunned, as it's not every day that you get a call from CID, and I said, 'Yes. But why exactly?' 'Oh, nothing to worry about, Mr. Cole,' they said. 'We'd like to ask you one or two questions.' I said, 'Anything specific?' Camp replied, 'What do you know about a group called Truth-Seekers'?"

Truth-Seekers was the brainchild of a British UFO investigator named Matthew Williams, who published a conspiracy-oriented magazine, *Truth-Seekers' Review*, from the mid-to-late 1990s, and who was also investigated by elements of British Intelligence from the mid-1990s onwards, as *On the Trail of the Saucer Spies* reveals.

"Well," continued Cole, "I wondered what they wanted and just said, 'Okay, I know about Truth-Seekers.' They replied, 'That'll do for us; can we come and have a chat?' I said, 'Yeah, sure. When would you like to come?' 'Can we come now?'

"As it happened," Cole elaborated, "I wasn't doing much, so it wasn't really a problem. But then it dawned on me: I'd only got their word for it that they were who they claimed to be. Well, I have a friend named Trish who works at Police Headquarters in the Incident Room. I called her and explained what had happened and asked if she could get over to my flat to check this guy out when he arrived. In the meantime, I surreptitiously set up a tape recorder in my living room, so that when D. S. Camp arrived, I could get the entire conversation down on tape. Well, then, of course, he and a colleague arrived.

"I opened the door, but the two guys didn't give their names; instead they just came in and sat down. I said, 'Sorry, you are . . . ?' 'Detective Sergeant Tim Camp.' His colleague stayed silent. 'As you know, Mr. Cole,' he said, 'we'd just like to ask you one or two questions about Truth-Seekers and what you know about them. It's nothing to worry about; we were just concerned that they might be a front for an IRA group and we have to check these things out.'

"We chatted about Matthew . . . and then they got around to me. 'What do you do? Who do you work for? What's your interest in the UFO phenomenon?' I told them, they seemed satisfied, and got up to leave. But just at that point, Trish arrived, and it turned out that she did know them; so they were legitimate police officers."

But official interest in Robin Cole was far from over, however.

"On the following day, I telephoned Cheltenham CID and asked to speak with D. S. Camp—I just wanted to make sure that I hadn't said anything which was going to get Matthew into hot water. When I asked for Detective Sergeant Tim Camp by name, the guy in CID said, 'We don't have a Detective Sergeant by that name working here.'

"At that point, I heard the guy say to one of his colleagues, 'Who the hell's Detective Sergeant Tim Camp?' I could hear mumbling and then this chap came back on the line, 'Detective Sergeant Camp isn't with CID; he's with Special Branch.'

"Eventually, I got through to his colleague—D. S. Camp wasn't available—and he basically said, 'Don't worry, Mr. Cole, we've got all the information that we wanted to know.' This got me thinking. Why is Cheltenham Police's Special Branch interested in [Matthew Williams's] UFO investigations group which, at the time, was based in South Wales? It didn't add up. Well, I now have a strong feeling that Special Branch were using Matthew as a front to check me out—to see if I had Nazi banners on the wall or anarchy signs on the front door.

"The reason I say this is because, just recently, I learned of a radio presenter in the north of England who was interested in doing a piece on GCHQ and asked people with knowledge to contact him. Lo and behold, the next day, Special Branch was around to question him. So, I find this all a little too coincidental. And it does suggest a direct link between (a) UFOs; (b) GCHQ; and (c) Special Branch."

The Metropolitan Police Special Irish Branch was formed in March 1883, initially as a small section of the CID of the Metropolitan Police. Its purpose was to combat, on a national basis, the then-ongoing Irish campaign of terrorism on the British mainland. Subsequently, the term "Irish" was dropped from the branch's title, because over time it took on responsibility for countering a wider range of extremist and terrorist activity.

Currently, Special Branch gathers, collates, analyzes, and exploits intelligence on violent political extremists. It initiates, develops, and conducts intelligence operations against terrorists; disseminates intelligence for operational use to law enforcement agencies at local, national, and international levels; and provides armed personal protection for Ministers of State, Foreign VIPs, and other persons if it is believed they are potential terrorist targets.

In addition Special Branch polices the ports within the London area to detect terrorist or criminal suspects while traveling into or out of the country, assists other government agencies to counter threats to the security of the United Kingdom from public disorder, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, biological, or chemical), investigates espionage by foreign powers, subversion of the democratic process, terrorism by Irish or International groups, and sabotage of the infrastructure of the UK.

In mid-2000, I contacted Cheltenham Police to inquire about the visit made to Cole's home by elements of Special Branch to discuss the activities of both Cole and Williams. Several days later, I received a telephone call from police at Cheltenham informing me that the only comment that Detective Sergeant Tim Camp of Special Branch would make to me was "no comment."

As fascinating as Cole's revelations were, still further evidence existed to show that his attempts to blow the lid off the secret UFO world of GCHQ attracted the keen attention of the Security and Intelligence services. Intriguingly, it appears from Cole's revelations that the official surveillance of his activities commenced months prior to the publication of his report in 1997. In other words, from the very day that he began looking into what GCHQ knew about UFOs, his every move was being watched and scrutinized. One such example was truly eye-opening. It took place in March 1997. Cole told me:

"I had just got home after a Sunday night out. I had some stuff to dump in my office and didn't switch the light on. I put the things down and just glanced out of the window. Well, outside my window there's a streetlight and beneath this was a white van. At first I just registered that the van seemed out of place. You know what it's like: You tend to recognize the various cars and vehicles in your own street. But then I thought: Well, it wasn't there when I came in 10 minutes ago. Why is it outside my flat under the streetlight? As I looked at it, I noticed that on top of the van were these two, weird, silver domes one behind the other—as if they were a part of the roof, built in. I thought that was odd, particularly when it occurred to me that where they were parked was also right next to the telephone junction box.

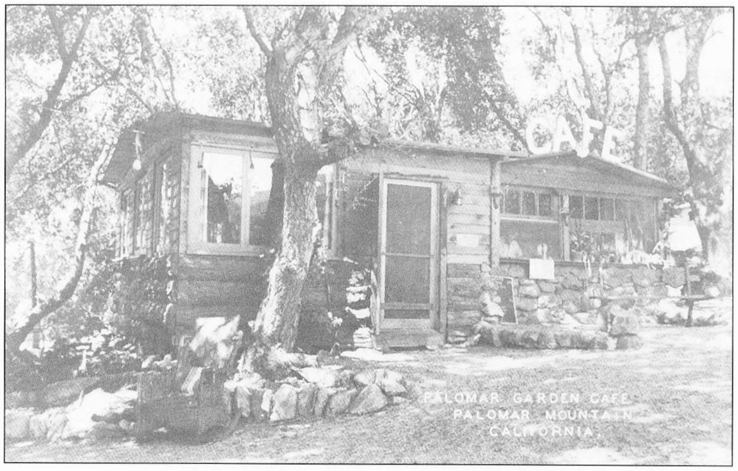
"At that point, I grabbed my camera and put the light on in the office. But as I did that, the van suddenly started up and went quickly down the road. Well, a couple of weeks later, the van turned up again. This time, I ran down the steps outside my flat and dashed into the road; and again the van started up and shot off. But it was enough for me to get details of the van's registration and make, which was a Bedford. Then I set about trying to trace the van.

"It so happens that I got a friend, a retired police officer, to pass the details on to a serving officer who put the details through the police computer. Well, a few days passed. But on getting home one evening, I found a few messages on my answer-phone from [the retired police officer] in a very excited state. As it was about 11 o'clock at night, I thought: It's too late to phone him now; I'll give him a call tomorrow. I went to bed, but at 12:15, the phone rang; it was him.

"He said: 'That vehicle—you were right to be suspicious about it. The registration regarding who actually owns it is blocked, but the address that it's registered to is a Ministry of Defense post office box in Wiltshire.' This was heavy stuff. But I've not seen the van since. But this was real proof that I was under some sort of surveillance."

Indeed, it was, and the case of Robin Cole is but one example of surveillance of UFO researchers. As *On the Trail of the Saucer Spies* demonstrates, there are countless other such examples that span the 1940s to the present day. In fact, the evidence I have uncovered suggests that we may be faced with the extraordinary fact that deep surveillance of the UFO research community is the norm, not the exception. ✦

PALOMAR GARDENS CAFÉ



This is the famed restaurant, formerly owned by Alice K. Wells on Palomar Mountain north of San Diego, California, where contactee George Adamski worked as a cook and met frequently with his followers. It was here in the late 1940s and early 1950s that Adamski set up his small telescope and allegedly took photos of dozens of UFOs.

I had long suspected there might be a postcard that showed the café, and it turns out there are at least two—this one, and another showing the few tables inside. In fact, the man visible in the window to the right of the front door looks very much like Adamski himself, although I can't verify it.

Wells, who died in 1980, also owned the adjoining land where a few cabins stood, one of which Adamski lived in. Although the café is long gone, the location where it stood is now occupied by the Oak Knoll Campground, operated from 1999 to 2005 by Larry Read and Elizabeth Norris. The property is currently for sale, so if you have $1.5 million to invest in a ufologically significant campground, now's your chance. See www.palomarproperties.com/out/outoakknoll/index.html.

The site is located near the intersection of state highway 76 and South Grade Road (formerly known as Highway to the Stars), a winding route with hairpin turns that leads to Palomar Observatory. —*George M. Eberhart*

CLOUD CIGARS: A FURTHER LOOK

BY HERBERT S. TAYLOR

Cloud cigars can be deservedly regarded as one of the most important aspects of the UFO phenomenon, one that will be central to obtaining any meaningful answers as to what this enduring mystery is all about. Despite their relative small numbers in comparison to other UFO categories, cloud cigars are often dramatic and spectacular sightings that are very difficult to attribute to mundane causes. They have several features that set them apart from other UFO cases. These include the observation of multiple objects, including the cigar-shaped UFO itself, as well as other smaller UFOs that often are ejected from it; an odd cloud or haze that often masks the central UFO; the large number of witnesses to the event; and a high percentage of daylight cases. Putting all of these together shows how distinctive cloud-cigar incidents are and why they deservedly occupy their own category in the UFO phenomenon.

There is no better place to begin a detailed examination of these cases than with a comprehensive account of an extraordinary report that occurred during the French wave of late summer and early fall of 1954. (It was mentioned only briefly in "Satellite Objects and Cloud Cigars," in *IUR,* 29:1, Spring 2004.) Note that the following account is taken verbatim from Aimé Michel's book on the French wave, *Flying Saucers and the Straight Line Mystery* (1958), which many people today have not read:

> The phenomenon was observed again just three weeks after Vernon on Tuesday, September 14, 1954. This time the spectacle took place in full daylight and was observed by hundreds of witnesses scattered through half a dozen villages in the department of Vendée, about 250 miles southwest of Paris. Nevertheless only one local newspaper mentioned it and this sighting is completely unknown except in the region where it happened. The witnesses were mostly farmers, and a few priests and schoolteachers. A reader in a nearby village heard of the matter and wrote to me, and thanks to that reader and his letter an investigation was made. (How many extraordinary sightings must be still unknown for want of such good luck!)
>
> One witness was Georges Fortin, then 34 years old, who operates a farm at a place called La Gabellière, near St-Prouant, a little village of 300 inhabitants. He reports:
>
> "It was about five in the afternoon. I was working in the fields with my men when all at once, emerging from the thick layer of clouds that looked like a storm coming up, we saw a sort of luminous blue-violet mist, of a regular shape something like a cigar or carrot. Actually, the object came out of the layer of clouds in an almost horizontal position, slightly tilted toward the ground and pointing forward (like a submerging submarine).

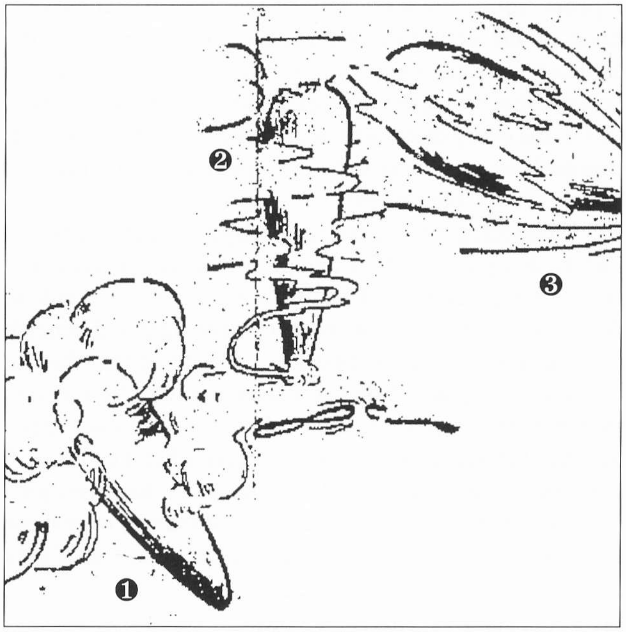
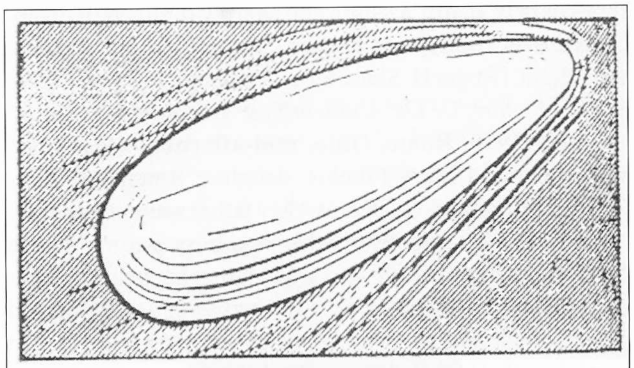


Illustration from France-Dimanche *showing Georges Fortin's observation: In (1), a cloud looking like a carrot emerged from the other clouds. In (2), a trail of white smoke jetted out from the base of the cloud, then a brilliant disc emerged, maneuvered, and reentered the cloud, which (3) then rose up and disappeared.*

Herbert S. Taylor has long been active in serious UFO research and has a deep and abiding interest that goes back more than half a century. He lives in Oceanside, New York.



La Gaudinière (Vendée)

Voici une soucoupe originale en forme de carotte. Aime à s'enrober de nuees qui semblent adhérer volontiers à ses parois. Receptacle de disques brillants qui évoluent autour. Observé par M. Fortin entre autres.

Another view of the Vendée object from France-Dimanche.

"This luminous cloud appeared rigid. Whenever it moved (and its movements had no connection with the movement of the clouds themselves) it did so all of a piece, as if it actually were some gigantic machine surrounded by mists. It came down rather fast from the ceiling of clouds to an altitude which we thought was perhaps a half mile above us. Then it stopped, and the point rose quickly until the object was in a vertical position, where it became motionless.

"During this time the dark clouds went on scudding across the sky, dimly lighted from underneath by the violet luminosity of the object. It was an extraordinary sight, and we watched it intently. All over the countryside other farmers had also dropped their tools and were staring up at the sky like us.

"All at once (by now we had been watching for several minutes) white smoke exactly like a vapor trail came from the lower end of the cloud. At first it pointed toward the ground, as if spun from an invisible shuttle falling free, then it gradually slowed down while turning around, and finally rose up to describe around the vertical object an ascending spiral which wound it up in its coils. While the rear of the trail was dissolving rapidly in the air, carried off by the wind, the beginning got sharper and finer all the time, as if it were gradually drying up at its source, but without any slowing down of the unseen object that was continually spinning it into the air.

"It thus went on up, turning around, up to the very top of the vertical object, and then started to come down again, turning in the other direction. Only then, after the smoke trail had vanished entirely, could we see the object that was 'sowing' it, a little metallic disk shining like a mirror and reflecting, in its rapid movements, flashes of light from the huge vertical object.

"The little disk almost immediately stopped turning around the luminous cloud and went down toward the ground again, this time moving away. For quite a few minutes we could see it flying low over the valley, darting here and there at great speed, sometimes speeding up, then stopping for a few seconds, then going on again. In this manner it flew in every direction over the region between St-Prouant and Sigournais, villages about four miles apart. Finally, when it was almost a mile from the vertical object, it made a final dash toward it at headlong speed, and disappeared like a shooting star into the lower part where it had first come out. Perhaps a minute later, the 'carrot' leaned over as it began to move, accelerated, and disappeared into the clouds in the distance, having resumed its original horizontal position, point forward. The whole thing had lasted about half an hour."

Standing next to M. Fortin was his farm hand, Louis Grellier, 36 years old, also from La Gabellière. Questioned separately, he gave an identical account, with further details about the gyrations of the disk.

Mme. Pizou, a 67-year-old-widow, of St-Prouant, was working in a cabbage field about a mile away from MM. Fortin and Grellier.

"My attention was first attracted about five o'clock," she said, "by the arrival of a strange carrot-shaped cloud that seemed to have detached itself from the ceiling of clouds that were moving fast, carried by the wind. It came near us, pointed downward, and then straightened up. It looked to me as if another, smaller cloud then formed above the carrot, making a kind of hat for it.

"Then white smoke came out like a thread from the base of the vertical carrot and began to draw designs all around it. Then the trail went away toward the valley, where trees hid whatever happened next; I was told that a disk came out of the trail, but I cannot say that I saw it, because from where I stood the treetops reached almost to the base of the vertical cloud. In my opinion it was not a real cloud, for it stayed motionless and kept its shape while other clouds were gliding away very fast above it, toward the horizon.

"Finally, when I had been watching for about half an hour, it moved down into a horizontal position again, and went away rapidly in the direction toward which it was slanted."

With Mme. Pizou were a daughter and a farm hand, who confirmed the old lady's story in every detail; the object's maneuvers, the complicated designs drawn by the trail, the duration of the affair.

At the same time ten or twelve people were in the streets and farmyards of St-Prouant. All saw the same sight the arrival of the horizontal "cloud," its rising to a vertical position, the smoke trail, the fantastic lines it drew, and its winding around. But these witnesses in the village could not see what took place close to the ground any more than Mme. Pizou could, because of buildings and trees.

Other farmers in the fields and villages in the river valley or between St-Prouant and Sigournais all gave accounts that confirmed one another and the stories of

> the first witnesses. Some of them saw the cigar leaning toward them, others saw it slant toward the right or to the left, according to where they were. We may mention M. Daniel Bornufart [another source says Bonifait—HT], an electrician who was at La Gabellière at five p.m.; M. Tissot at La Legerie, and several others working with him; finally many farmers at La Libaudière, Chassay, Le Coudrais, La Godinière, and elsewhere in all, several hundred witnesses." [Michel mentions the Nantes newspaper *La Résistance de l'Ouest* of September 20, 1954, but not the national weekly newspaper *France-Dimanche*, which also carried some drawings as well.]

Clearly a remarkable observation involving hundreds of witnesses! What can be said about it? Critics might attempt an explanation in terms of some type of meteorological or atmospheric manifestation. However, I defy them to point out anything in the standard textbooks on meteorology or atmospheric physics that can come even remotely close to providing a prosaic answer to account for what was seen that day, including any attempt to invoke a tornado or something similar as a possible answer. Not only does the testimony of the many witnesses preclude any such proffered explanation from being taken seriously, but the meteorologists were definite on the point that there was no tornado anywhere in France on September 14. Whatever it was that was seen in the skies of the French Department of Vendée more than half a century ago remains a baffling mystery to this day.

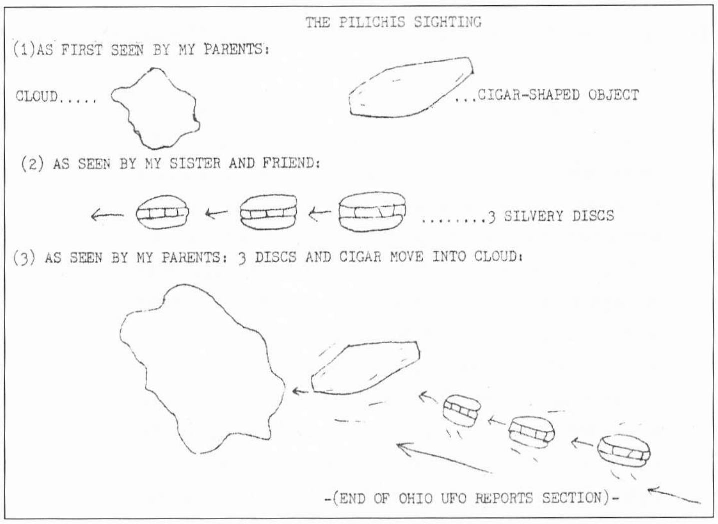
MORE REPORTS FOR THE RECORD

Cloud cigar reports have been with us almost from the beginning of the modern UFO era in 1947, and they continue today. In this section I present a representative sampling of these cases spanning almost 50 years.

July 18 or 19, 1952, Pouilly-en-Auxois (Côte d'Or Department), France, 6:00 p.m. Residents of Pouilly and Venarey-les-Laumes saw a "spindle, having neither wings nor protuberances, emitting a brief, strong, winking light at regular intervals, and giving rise to a very thick white smoke that rapidly dispersed." The object was described as about 30 meters long, in a vertical position, and accompanied by a loud rumbling noise. (Jacques Vallee, *Anatomy of a Phenomenon*, 1965.)

September 6, 1967, Meir, Stoke-on-Trent, England, approx. 9:50 p.m. Witnesses first noticed a vertical sausage-shaped cloud in the eastern sky that seemed to have a light behind it, which flashed at irregular intervals over a period of about 20 seconds. Then a bright, glowing orange, oval-shaped object came from the cloud and flashed at a "fantastic speed" across the sky in a southeasterly direction, doing this in about three seconds. The light in the cloud glowed again for about 10 seconds, and then stopped. Object [presumably the orange oval—HT] was as big as a football held at arm's length and sharply outlined. It disappeared over rooftops of houses. Scattered cloud and dull moonlight. (Roger H. Stanway and Anthony R. Pace, *Flying Saucer Report, UFOs: Unidentified, Undeniable*, 1968.)

July 1970, Rome, Ohio, mid-afternoon. Witnesses were John and Mary Pilichis, daughter Bonnie, and her friend. Stated their son Dennis, "My father was cutting grass on our property and my mother was busy putting all the freshly-cut grass into big sacks. My father happened to look up, and there not too high in the sky was a *huge* cigar-shaped object, about the size of an imported smoking cigar held at arm's length. He called my mother's attention to it, and they both just stood there watching this thing as it sent the rays of the sun off its body.


THE PILICHIS SIGHTING
(1)AS FIRST SEEN BY MY PARENTS:
CLOUD.....
...CIGAR-SHAPED OBJECT
(2) AS SEEN BY MY SISTER AND FRIEND:
.......3 SILVERY DISCS
(3) AS SEEN BY MY PARENTS: 3 DISCS AND CIGAR MOVE INTO CLOUD:
-(END OF OHIO UFO REPORTS SECTION)-

"In the meantime, my sister Bonnie and her friend were at a swimming pool about one-half mile from our parents and they saw 3 silvery disc-shaped objects flying end-to-end toward our home. My sister began waving and yelling to my parents who were now seeing the discs coming in on the cigar too, but they didn't hear her. As the discs got close to the 'cigar,' this object and the 3 discs then went inline front to back into a huge peculiar cloud nearby (one of the few clouds in the sky at that time). My parents waited 3 or 4 minutes thinking the UFOs would re-emerge from the cloud, but as they watched, the cloud began to 'break apart'—as Mom said, '... as if a tornado was ripping it apart.' The cloud disintegrated and there were no UFOs; perhaps they had already left the cloud in a manner that those on the ground couldn't see." (*Ohio UFO Reporter*, Sept.-Nov. 1971, double issue 5-6.)

February 12, 1981, Flagstaff, Arizona, night. "The craft was cigar-shaped looking, kind of like a large blimp. Was at night, white looking, with veins of some sort on the outside of the craft, dark in color, around the craft. There was a very small white object at one end of the blimp. After about two minutes, the small bright round object took off from the main body of the craft. It took off at a very high rate of speed and disappeared in the sky. The blimp object lost its light and disappeared into a kind of fog type look, and drifted away. At least 25 to 30 people saw this event happen on the interstate freeway that night." (National UFO Reporting Center.)

May 22, 1996, Tasmania, Australia, approx. 3:30 p.m. A motorist on the West Tamar Highway near Brady's Lookout noticed an upright, vapor-like trail to the north towards the Georgetown area. The trail changed into an upright, bronze-colored cigar shape which somehow just disappeared in front of the witness's eyes. (*TUFOIC Newsletter*, no. 79.)

May 29, 1996, Launceston, Tasmania, Australia, approx. 1:00 p.m. A vertical, misty-type cloud was seen against the clear blue sky. It appeared to form into a vertical upright cylinder which seemed to have a long hole. The witness and a friend who had observed the object looked away for a second, only to find that the object had disappeared in that brief time. (*TUFOIC Newsletter*, no. 79.)

July 21, 1998, Napoleon, Ohio, 11:19 p.m. "The main object appeared in the sky suddenly. It was the size of a small trailer. It emitted a dense fog around it, and we never saw the real craft. It stayed stationary for seven minutes, and then branched out from the front and seemed to 'grow.' Five smaller craft were seen circling the main craft as if to protect it. The large craft seemed to dissolve and disappear. For several minutes later the small craft still circled." (National UFO Reporting Center.)

October 10, 1999, Lewiston, Michigan, 11:45 p.m. "I was looking out our bedroom window watching the sky and saw this object through the haze. It was crystal clear last night, that's why I really noticed this 'haze.' It was oval shaped with white lights that would get very bright and then get very dim, like a very slow pulsing light. What really got me was all the other little 'lights' flying around it. I asked my husband to look at it, and he couldn't figure out what it was either. It was stationary and all these other little lights were buzzing around it. It reminded both of us of moths flying around a light bulb. There was no set pattern to their flight, and it looked like some of them flew into this thing. We watched it for about 45 minutes and it didn't do anything else, so we went to sleep as we have to get up early, and it was almost 12:45 a.m. I got up a few hours later and looked to see if it was still there, and it was gone. No haze, no lights, nothing. I guess what really made us notice this thing was because of the haze that surrounded it. There was no other haze around, and neither one of us had ever seen anything that looked like that. Sure would like to know what it was." (National UFO Reporting Center.)

October 29, 1999, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 5:45 p.m. "I was on my way to drop the kids off at church when I saw something out of the corner of my eye. It looked like something falling out of the sky smoking. Nothing was visible. We never saw anything come out. It looked like a contrail after it fully appeared. I dropped them off and went back home. I immediately told my husband to come out on the back porch to see if he could tell me what it was that I saw. He looked and he said it is a cloud, but it was not moving like the other clouds. I told him that at first I thought it was a meteorite. We then decided it was some sort of contrail, but there was no aircraft in sight. We continued to watch, and he saw a nickel colored object fly out of it. I didn't see it at first, then I kept watching, and I saw it fly back into it. Then a few seconds later it shot back out and flew all around this contrail or whatever it was. Then it disappeared for a few minutes. We kept watching, and it flew back out and disappeared. We never saw it again. I was scared by this. I don't know what it was, neither did my husband. It started out as some sort of weird contrail, and then it became stationary. Then this nickel-colored object flew all around and in and out of it for about 15 minutes. Very weird. When this object was flying you could hear no sound, or see any contrail coming out of it. I don't know what it was. I have never seen anything like it. . . . Also about an hour after we saw this we heard jets flying, we looked out and they were headed in the same direction as to where we saw the 'thing,' for lack of a better word. I would not have thought that strange until they went back several times, like they were doing a grid search. That's about it." (National UFO Reporting Center.)

SOME CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

It should be evident by now that cloud cigar cases have a distinctive and narrow set of recurrent patterns. (Also, see my two other *IUR* articles, 29:1 and 29:4, on cloud cigars and satellite object cases). These patterns have been established and are durable, and the importance of this finding cannot be stressed enough. Whatever the nature of what has been seen globally and through the years, witnesses have described it in relatively similar terms. And, it is important to note that when people think of "flying saucers," the concept of cloud cigars is certainly *not* what comes to mind. Even today, with all the information available on UFOs, cloud cigar sightings remain virtually unknown to the media and public. This gives us more confidence in the reports, and makes it unlikely that witnesses are fabricating these reports. Further, the usual gamut of explanations that account for the large majority of raw UFO reports do not apply to cloud cigars in any conceivable manner. They pose an enormous challenge to science, as, of course, does the whole of the UFO phenomenon. What will it take for the scientific community to awaken from their long slumber and come to the same obvious conclusion? How much longer must we wait? ✦

ARCHIVES FOR UFO RESEARCH

The Archives for UFO Research in Sweden has for many years done a splendid job of collecting UFO literature worldwide. AFU has even been able to obtain an intern recently to help them arrange their files, and they have a lot of fun baking alien cakes. Check out their website at www.afu.info/projects.htm.

THE AMATEUR ASTRONOMER AND THE UFO PHENOMENON

BY GERT HERB AND J. ALLEN HYNEK

Editor's Note: This article was originally included in the Fall 1980 issue of the *CUFOS Bulletin*, a newsletter that the Center published for several years. We are reprinting the article in *IUR* for several reasons. Many current readers of *IUR* have never seen this article, or any issues of the *CUFOS Bulletin* for that matter. Most importantly, the article presents results from an intriguing research project that has been mostly forgotten by today's ufologists and the UFO-interested public.

Gert Herb was an amateur astronomer who lived in the Chicago area. He became a volunteer at the Center in the 1970s, and he eventually proposed that the Center survey amateur astronomers to determine their attitudes about the UFO phenomenon and the number and types of any UFO sightings they may have had. Herb hoped the survey would be a companion to the one that Peter A. Sturrock carried out among professional astronomers (*Report on a Survey of the Membership of the American Astronomical Society Concerning the UFO Problem,* Stanford University Institute for Plasma Research, January 1977).

Given today's attitudes toward UFO organizations and the UFO phenomenon in general, it is rather inconceivable that amateur astronomy groups would give permission for a survey of their members about UFOs. Times were very different in the 1970s. The study of UFOs, while not quite respectable, was attracting serious scientific attention, and it wasn't completely crazy or goofy to be studying UFOs. Thus, with the Center's support, Herb gained the cooperation of three groups and mailed questionnaires to all their members.

Although Sturrock's survey is often and correctly cited as important evidence that scientists—at least astronomers—supported UFO study and have even seen things in the sky they could not identify, Herb's survey is in some ways more significant. As the authors note, amateur astronomers are usually more familiar with the sky, especially with the naked eye, than professionals. The latter group may look outside for a break from an observing session, but professional observers spend their time working with a telescope, taking measurements and photos, and not using the telescope for visual observations. Amateur observers routinely scan the sky and normally (at least back in the 1970s) do much of their work visually.

Consequently, UFO sightings by amateurs should be more frequent than those by professionals, and amateurs might even be better able to find an explanation for odd things seen in the sky. And whether they are more frequent or not, UFO sightings by amateur astronomers should be more trustworthy and believable than those from the public at large. That is the key point to take from this article.

We will add commentary in brackets to the article where appropriate to highlight various points or to add perspective from today to Herb's findings.

Many of our readers are acquainted with the Sturrock Report, the survey of the views of professional astronomers on UFOs, particularly with reference to whether they felt UFOs are worthy of scientific investigation, and to any UFO experiences they themselves might have had. Of 2,611 questionnaires mailed out, 1,356 were returned (52%). In answer to the question whether UFOs were worthy of scientific attention, only 20% of the respondents expressed a definite negative attitude (17% "probably not" and 3% "certainly not"), the remaining 80% being favorably inclined, 23% saying "certainly," the others "probably." Still, this was nearly eight times as many as said "certainly not." In response to the question of personal UFO sightings, 62, or 4% of the professional respondents, reported that they had observed events or objects they failed to identify, 16 of these being daylight sightings.

The question naturally arises, if this was the response among professional astronomers, what might be the response from the larger population of amateur astronomers, especially as regards the question of personal sightings. After all, contrary to popular opinion, professional astronomers spend little time in the actual observation of the open skies, being extremely mission-oriented in examining very restricted fields through large telescopes, while amateur astronomers spend their time in a much wider survey of the skies. Further, professional astronomical observation is almost entirely done with instruments rather than with the eyes, concentrating again on minute portions of the sky. It has been estimated, for instance, that if the world's largest telescope were used every night of the year, it would take several hundred years to cover the entire sky and accomplish the type of detailed observations done with such instruments. The amateur astronomer, on the other hand, often scans the entire sky available to him several times a night.

Further still, serious amateur astronomers are often much more familiar with the appearance of the night sky than professional astronomers (as odd as that may seem), to whom each star is merely a number in a catalogue. Then again, they have available easily maneuverable or mobile optical equipment, suitable for resolving short-lived aerial phenomena, whereas their professional counterparts are constrained by large and unwieldy instruments. Too, they are more widely distributed geographically than their counterparts.

Thus amateurs should be able to spot unusual occurrences as well as to weed out, because of their training and experience, sky phenomena that often puzzle the public and lead to spurious UFO reports—meteors, planets, twinkling stars, and even advertising planes.

All of these factors made it quite natural to query amateur astronomers about their possible experiences with very unusual sky events, and one of us (Herb) was the one who proposed that this be done, and who undertook to do it.

Fortunately, almost all amateur astronomers are affiliated with one or more organizations devoted to their hobby. These organizations are the Astronomical League, the Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers (ALPO), the International Occultation Timing Association (IOTA), and the American Association of Variable Star Observers (AAVSO).

Herb approached all four organizations, with the full support of the CUFOS scientific director (Hynek), and that of the Center, asking for cooperation in this venture. Only the AAVSO refused to cooperate (hardly a tribute to an open-minded, scientific attitude), but the Astronomical League, which publishes the magazine *The Reflector*, kindly sent our questionnaire to their subscriber list of some 7,800 persons. However, only 1,622 (21%) responded. Somehow, one would have wished astronomers to have done better! [Actually, since the survey was sent by bulk mail, this is a surprisingly good response and suggests interest in the UFO subject.]

The two smaller organizations, ALPO and IOTA, with a total membership of 726, were polled as a single population. Though small, these groups are comprised of people devoted to more specialized aspects of amateur astronomy requiring special skills and often more specialized astronomical equipment, as well as dedicated motivation.

However, only 505 members received questionnaires, as was determined by a follow-up that was possible in this case. Since bulk mailing was used, this may have accounted for the 221 members who stated they had not received questionnaires. This may also explain why the response from the Astronomical League members was relatively poor, if bulk mailing had also been used. Of the 505 members receiving questionnaires, however, 290, or 57% responded! [Yes, this is a fantastic response rate, given the circumstances.]

Our main concern in this venture was to determine whether the amateur-astronomer population as a whole contained members who had had a UFO experience of some sort. Herb had been disturbed by Arthur C. Clarke's statement in his book *Promise of Space* (Harper and Row, 1968) that amateur astronomers have not reported UFOs. (Maybe no one asked them before!) He also asked them whether they believed UFOs "probably or certainly exist," "possibly exist," or "probably or certainly do not exist."

Although 67% of all the amateurs felt that UFOs certainly, probably, or possibly exist, responses to this question cannot be given the same weight as the question, "Have you ever observed an object which resisted your most exhaustive efforts at identification?" This is not the same as the question, "Have you ever seen a UFO?" The latter, and the earlier question about belief in UFOs, depends largely on what one's definition of a UFO is. Is it a visitor from outer space, a natural phenomenon, a man-made device, or what? The question as to whether they could or could not identify an object is direct and unambiguous.

Let us therefore go directly to the results of that question. Mr. Clarke, take notice: Of the total of 1,805 respondents from all organizations, 427 said "Yes" to that question! That's nearly one-quarter of the respondents (24%) [and verifying the supposition that amateurs would see more unidentified phenomenon than professionals]. However, that overall result deserves closer analysis. Were all the observers of the same proficiency? How much observing experience had they had? How did the reported sightings differ: Were they all faint lights in the night sky, were there some daytime sightings, were there sightings of high strangeness? Were any of them observed or photographed through a telescope? How many binocular observations were made?

OBSERVING PROFICIENCY AND REPORTS

As to proficiency, Herb established a proficiency scale in which the following factors were considered: Did the astronomer keep regular observing records? Did he or she follow a structured personal observing program? Did he or she work in cooperation with a national organization such as ALPO, AAVSO, etc.? How long had this person been an amateur astronomer?

Herb then selected, on the basis of replies to these questions, 261 "senior" observers who had rated highest on the above criteria. Most of these, as might be expected, came from the ranks of ALPO and IOTA members.

Now, Mr. Clarke, really take notice! The senior observers, all of whom are thoroughly familiar with the night skies, reported 74 objects "which resisted most exhaustive efforts at identification." [This is a greater percentage, more than 28%, than the sighting frequency by all observers.]

Well, what sort of objects? Herb subdivided all reports received into five classes, according to their trajectories and apparent angular sizes. These divisions bear some resemblance to both the UFOCAT classifications and the six classifications originally proposed by one of us (Hynek). The classifications are:

Class	*Definition*
0	Point source in uniform motion
1	Extended source in uniform motion
2	Point source in erratic motion
3	Extended source in erratic motion
4	Object observed at short enough distance as to leave no doubt in observer's mind that something strange was observed

Classes 1, 3, and 4 are clearly of great interest. An extended object in either uniform or erratic motion is of interest because it is most unlikely that a meteor or a high-flying plane would fool trained observers: They are all too familiar with them. Further, almost all observers have binoculars handy, and they were generally used. Even a point source in erratic motion can be of considerable interest. Class 4 is, of course, the most interesting of all; that four such cases were reported by the selected senior observers is noteworthy.

66 UNKNOWNS SEEN THROUGH A TELESCOPE

With so many amateur astronomers reporting observations that resisted attempts at explanation, one immediately asks, "How many observations were made with the astronomer's telescope or binoculars, presumed handy at all times?" Sixty-six out of 427 observations of all sorts were made through a telescope, generally after the object was spotted first by eye. Forty additional objects were observed by binoculars alone. Thus, nearly a quarter of the puzzling observations were made with optical aids!

Herb next singled out cases of high strangeness; i.e., cases of sources in erratic motion and the "close encounter" cases. Fourteen of these were observed through a telescope and 17 through binoculars.

SEVEN OBJECTS PHOTOGRAPHED

Seven objects were photographed: Three were of point sources; one was of an extended object, somewhat egg-shaped, and was taken through a telescope; one object had six photographs taken of it in quick succession (this was of an object which transited across Saturn like a little moon); another photo was of two symmetrical cloud-like objects moving in unison. This last was a photo of a "cloud" that moved rapidly at irregular intervals, moving toward and away from the sun in 15° arcs, more or less along the ecliptic (the cloud itself was 25° long). As is the case with most UFO photographs, they remain unexplained and very puzzling, but prove nothing positive. The whole field of ufology has yet to produce one good photograph of a strange object at close range.

We properly point out two considerations in assessing these startling results from the amateurs. (It was thought at the start that the questionnaires might even show that amateur astronomers never saw anything strange in the course of their observations, and that perhaps Mr. Clarke would be proved correct. None of us expected such a harvest of unknowns.) There is a strong possibility that those who had made a sighting would very probably be more apt to fill out the questionnaire and return it than the nonsighters. They certainly ought to have been more motivated. If, therefore, one counts all persons polled, and not only those who responded, we get a minimum of about 5.2% UFO sighters, as against 23.7% when we consider all respondents (427/1,805). The "true" percentage is thus somewhere between these two limits, but even if only 5% of all amateur astronomers made valid sightings of truly unusual objects, this would still be of great significance. [By comparison, if we make the same calculation for professional astronomers in the Sturrock survey, the sighting rate drops to 2.4%, which is still impressive. In contrast, the sighting rate among the general public is somewhere between 5 and 10%, depending on which survey result we use.]

It is interesting that no amateur astronomer reported a close encounter of the third kind, that is, with creatures peering out of portholes or standing by their craft on the ground. With peer pressure being what it is, it is likely that had such a case actually been observed, it might well have not been reported!

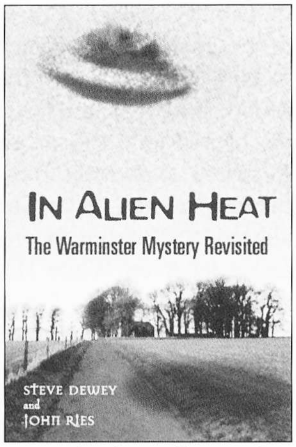
Herb is now preparing a compendium of what was actually reported in each case. When completed, it will be available for examination at the Center; it is hoped that funds will become available to publish the catalogue and a more extended report. [Regrettably, Herb never completed a final report of the survey results.]

Finally, we conclude this report with a word of caution. Amateur astronomers are no less subject to psychological aberrations than the general public; their increased competence in distinguishing between known and unknown phenomena need not necessarily be matched by a desire for disinterested judgment. Thus the results of this survey should not be accepted as evidence for the existence of UFOs. Here we run into the ever-troublesome matter of the definition of a UFO. We believe that the survey amply demonstrates that even amateur astronomers, surely more capable than the general public in identifying objects in the night sky, come across things in the sky that defy explanation. If we remember that the "U" in UFO simply means "unidentified," then the survey does prove that amateur astronomers report UFOs, quite contrary to Arthur C. Clarke's contention. But then, that gentleman falls into the

(continued on page 24)

BOOK REVIEWS

In Alien Heat: The Warminster Mystery Revisited, by Steve Dewey and John Ries. San Antonio: Anomalist Books, 2006. 322 p. $17.95.



A passionately energetic, uncritically minded, and mystically inclined small-town journalist begins to publicize local reports of nocturnal lights and other oddities. He has ties to an urban tabloid which further circulates the claims, promoting the notion that the community is uniquely attractive to otherworldly visitors. Curiosity seekers, occultists, drug-addled hippies, and a few ufologists arrive to participate in sky watches, during which some mistake ordinary phenomena, natural (astronomical bodies) and artificial (satellites and airplanes), for extraordinary things. Hoaxers and practical jokers take advantage of the situation. The journalist goes on to claim interactions with pure-hearted space people, who spout the usual drivel, and writes some inane books. In due course the affair runs its predictable course and is recalled, if by practically nobody, with amusement or embarrassment.

Sound like a book you can hardly wait to read? Well, maybe a novel—preferably a literary, not a science-fiction, exercise—could make something of such unsurprising and unpromising material. As nonfiction, possibly an extended journal article on an obscure moment in popular imagination would do. In response to underwhelming demand, however, Steve Dewey and John Ries have produced more than 300 pages' worth of *In Alien Heat: The Warminster Mystery Revisited.* Nobody will accuse it of being a page-turner. Well, at any rate nobody short of British skeptic David Clarke, who spares no hyperbole or enthusiasm in a quote on the back cover ("fresh . . . fascinating . . . should be read by everyone who wants to know 'the truth' behind the UFO mystery"). Suffice it to say that other readers, slogging through a book that sometimes feels more like 600 pages, will have no trouble sparing both hyperbole and enthusiasm.

What is a "Warminster mystery"? I have heard of it because I was reading England's *Flying Saucer Review* in the latter 1960s, when that magazine—largely owing, I learn in this book, to the half-mad Gordon Creighton's excitation (which never took much to ignite, in any event)—gave it coverage, some of it silly and gullible, some of it appropriately skeptical. Till now, the only book on the subject to appear in the United States was the widely unread *UFO Prophecy*, published three decades ago on a tiny imprint owned by contactee/New Age entrepreneur Timothy Green Beckley. Dewey and Ries won't recognize that name, but it will tell American readers all they need to know about how seriously ufologists here took the matter.

Warminster is a touristy sort of place, located in Wiltshire to the rural southwest of London. Over a decade, but most actively around approximately the end of the 1960s and the very early 1970s, local journalist Arthur Shuttlewood, not a ufologist as such but a saucer buff on his way to his true calling as a contactee, stirred the UFO pot. And it happened while Dewey and Ries were growing up there. If not for that accident of birth and geography, this largely pointless, spottily interesting book would not exist, I'm sure. For all their loathing of ufology and ufologists, even they can't bring themselves to declare Warminster a momentous moment in UFO history. These days it is barely a glimmer even in the collective memory of saucerians.

"Saucerians," by the way, is a phrase that never appears in the book. In a charitable interpretation, that is because the authors—whose grasp of the nuances of the UFO controversy and its personalities is close to nonexistent—have never heard of it. It is, however, a useful way of separating, as the religious-studies scholar J. Gordon Melton observed many years ago, those focused on unidentified phenomena whose nature is undetermined and can only be speculated about from those who hold that the phenomena are identified and known, specifically as spacecraft piloted by friendly, godlike extraterrestrials. The former are ufologists, who (in varying degrees of intellectual sophistication) are empiricists, and the latter are saucerians, who harbor what amounts to a religious sensibility.

Supremely confident that UFOs are nonsense, the authors choose not to take note of such inconvenient distinctions. To them ufologists, nearly to a man and woman, are idiots who have "no references to the real world," are "members of the New Age," believe Queen Elizabeth has a secret identity as a reptilian alien, and subscribe to a "technoreligion." UFO evidence consists in its entirety of "photographs and videos of dubious quality." Hoaxes are "fundamental to ufology," and UFOs are either (to fantasy-prone ufologists) alien spaceships or (to those who reside in the real world with the authors) just a bunch of unrecognized IFOs. Close encounters otherwise unexplainable are hallucinations. Not only that, but Carl Sagan, whom Dewey and Ries cite frequently on questions related to psychological anomalies, is the final word on altered states of consciousness, and the true authorities on UFOs are somebody named John T. Sladek, who years ago wrote a Martin Gardner-style debunking opus, and somebody else named Christopher Evans, who did the same.

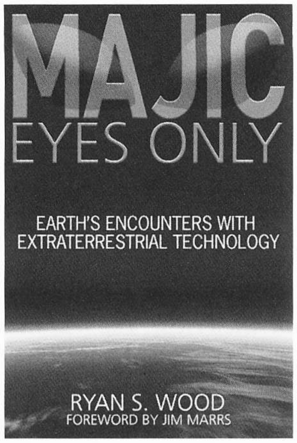
Where Warminster is concerned, the authors allow as how they couldn't be bothered actually to interview anybody who participated in the affair. Consequently, they've done no more than assemble a body of contemporary writings and appended jeering commentary. In other words, this is neither the approach taken by the classic close-up study of an ongoing saucerian episode, *When Prophecy Fails* (1956)—which I've always thought of as a comic novel masked as a sociological tract—nor a serious effort to reconstruct what happened from the actual memories and testimonies of those who were there. Retrospective accounts have their obvious limitations, but surely it is worthwhile to know what the supposed witnesses think today. (From decades-old testimony, I once learned, for instance, the truth about an alleged historical UFO incident and the social circumstances that gave rise to it.) Actually, one suspects that participants' views, in addition to whatever else they might bring to the discussion, would simply have been more *interesting* than the authors'.

There are also the odd anachronisms. When was the last time, to cite one example, that you heard someone call a wave a "flap"? Dewey and Ries seem not to have left the ufological sensibility of the 1950s (which perhaps explains, too, their weird obsession with extraterrestrial spacecraft). They also labor under the curious misapprehension that John Keel and Jacques Vallee must be skeptics because they reject extraterrestrial spacecraft as one explanation for UFO reports. In reality, Keel and Vallee abandoned the ETH for far more scientifically improbable notions based in occultism and, in Vallee's case, conspiracy theory. One suspects, though, that for Dewey and Ries, all that counted in this context was the cynical maxim that the enemy of my enemy is my friend.

Unlike *Prophecy*, *In Alien Heat* is neither terribly enlightening nor terribly entertaining, except in the unlikely event that you demand no more than boilerplate in your analysis. One sometimes has the sense that the authors did no more than cram the contents of a few debunking books into a random-word generator and preserve the results between covers. I guess that's how debunkers get to "'the truth' behind the UFO mystery" these days. It *is* easier than actual intellectual effort, and who wants to think too hard anyway? —*Jerome Clark*

Majic Eyes Only, by Ryan S. Wood. Redwood City, Calif.: The author, 2005. 328p. $30.00.

Although *Majic Eyes Only* is subtitled "Earth's Encounters with Extraterrestrial Technology" and contains a long list of possible crashes or retrievals of alien technology, it is also an argument for the reality of the Majestic-12 (MJ-12 or Majic) documents. It is clearly a book written by a believer and written for believers, which is not necessarily a bad thing.



For those who don't know, the original MJ-12 documents were delivered into the hands of Jaime Shandera, a Hollywood producer, and William J. Moore, a writer and UFO researcher. The documents were discovered on a roll of undeveloped 35mm film sent to Shandera, apparently from Albuquerque, New Mexico, in the early to mid-1980s. These original documents were an alleged 1952 briefing for president-elect Dwight Eisenhower and a letter on White House stationary authorizing the creation of MJ-12 by President Harry Truman. Moore and Shandera also located in the National Archives, they claimed, a memo from one government official to another that mentioned MJ-12. Later, additional documents would be received by a host of other researchers.

But rather than worry about this and to point out that the arguments for and against MJ-12 have appeared in many magazine articles and books (including *Top Secret/Majic* by Stanton Friedman and my 2002 book *Case MJ-12: The True Story Behind the Government's UFO Conspiracies,* for those interested in pursuing this), I'll deal mainly with the list of crash retrievals and debris recovery detailed in *Majic Eyes Only*.

Wood has selected the cases from the long lists that have been produced by others, including the late Leonard Stringfield. He begins with the crash of an airship in Aurora, Texas, in 1897 and ends with the event on the Isle of Lewis, Scotland, in late 1996. In between are cases that are solid, solidly investigated, cases that are weak and solidly investigated, and some that haven't been investigated at all. Some are only single-witness cases. Others are based on documents that suggest something unusual and possibly extraterrestrial happened that resulted in the recovery of alien material.

The first case reviewed is, in this context, one of the most disturbing, at least to this reviewer. Wood rates the Aurora, Texas, crash as high, meaning it has an "authenticity level of 80 to 100%." Wood defines this as ". . . virtually all of the available investigative channels and ideas have been pursued, and with each test the case or document has shown to be authentic or nearly problem free. At this level, multiple witnesses are present that have seen the crash or aftermath, or read a document in an 'official' capacity. . . . Physical evidence is available; for example, rocks to test, scarred trees, photographs or direct ET materials. . . . all indicate the highest level of authenticity. At least several researchers are in substantial agreement about the core evidence of the case, often for many years."

Yet, with the Aurora, Texas, crash, we have none of those things. The eyewitness testimony, taken in the early 1970s, is at best contradictory with these witnesses telling one researcher one thing and another something else. The physical evidence, gathered in the 1970s, can't be linked to the airship crash and is therefore irrelevant. And the documentation available, in the form of newspaper articles, does nothing to prove the case. In fact, according to Jerome Clark in the second edition of his *UFO Encyclopedia,* "Wise County historian Etta Pegues looked into the story. . . . Among the old-timers she interviewed was Mrs. Robbie Hanson, who declared, 'It was a hoax. I was in school that day and nothing happened.'"

Taking it further, Clark noted, "Moreover, Pegues wrote, if the Aurora story had been factual rather than fiction Cliff D. Cates would have included it in his *Pioneer History of Wise County* which he published in 1907. . . . Also, if it had been true, Harold R. Bost would have included it in his *Saga of Aurora*."

If nothing else, these facts should impact on the overall rating of the case, moving it from high to, at best, medium and probably to medium low.

There are other such problems. Cases that have been thought of as hoaxes for decades have new life here including the Maury Island case of June 1947, the Plains of San Agustin crash of July 1947, and the Aztec, New Mexico, case of 1948.

One of the footnotes in the section on the Plains of San Agustin is troubling to me. The information about Roscoe Wilmeth, who supposedly heard about the crash and the bodies and even talked of a "bodies site," was attributed to me in *A History of UFO Crashes*.

While that information is accurate, it is not the whole picture. Robert Drake gave the information about Wilmeth to Stan Friedman. Friedman tried to contact Wilmeth, but was never able to do so. Wilmeth died before Friedman could interview him. So the information about the bodies from Drake comes second hand, at best.

Worse still, there is no corroboration for Drake's tales. He said that he was riding back to Albuquerque with three other men after he had learned of the crash out on the Plains from a cowboy on a ranch where they had stopped. According to Drake, originally, they all discussed the crash on their way back to Albuquerque. Interviewed separately by Tom Carey, each denied the conversations had taken place. It means that Drake's testimony is unsupported by any independent fact and does nothing to corroborate the crash on the Plains. In fact, and worse still, it is contradicted by those men Drake said would be able to confirm his account.

For a case level as medium high, or 60 to 80% authentic, Wood defines it such "that a considerable amount of investigation has been completed. Witnesses are present, stories appear genuine, a few anachronisms may be present but have reasonable explanations. Forensic testing, if possible, has been partially completed, and there are strong signs of case validity. . . ."

Fair enough. But, what about the Santa Rosa, New Mexico, case of the spring or winter of 1963? It is single-witness, there are no corroborating witnesses or documents, and it is somewhat preposterous on the face of it. Yet, it is labeled as medium-high. Wood does not seem to apply his rating system evenly and consistently.

At least with the Indiantown Gap case from the winter of 1969, Wood admits that it is single-witness, stating, "The only known source to this crash retrieval incident comes from Sergeant 1st Class Clifford Stone."

Stone claimed that the craft was "wedge-shaped" and that there were bodies found. Stone said that he was told to take readings with a Geiger counter and as he did, he realized that he was seeing something that was not from Earth.

Wood rates the case as needing more research, but in reality, there is but a single witness and that witness, Stone, has been caught in embellishments in other stories he has told.

But even with these criticisms, it should be noted that Wood has done a real service here. As Stringfield did before him, Wood has provided some interesting information on incidents in which it is possible that alien artifacts, or the remains of interstellar craft, have been recovered. He provides the elements of the case, commenting on the value of the specific case, and giving the sources of the information. Stringfield's hope had been to learn more about a report through the publication of the information. Wood seems to have a similar goal in mind.

These listings, all 75 of them, are the heart of the book. But wrapped around them are the arguments for the existence of the Majestic-12. Nearly all UFO researchers agree that if there were an alien spaceship that crashed near Roswell, then a committee like MJ-12 would have been created to exploit it. The question has always been if MJ-12 was that committee, or if it was the creation of UFO researchers to fill in gaps in their knowledge.

In a chapter called, "The Authenticity of the Special Operations Manual," contributed by Robert Wood (father of the author and longtime ufologist), there is an explanation of the manual. This was a document apparently created as a guide for those who are responsible for the crash retrievals. A document which then leaked into the UFO community a number of years ago.

Robert Wood listed a number of objections that opponents have made over the years. One of those objections was that there had been no document control number. Wood, working with Don Berliner who received the original film with the manual on it, found that one of the documents

(continued on page 24)

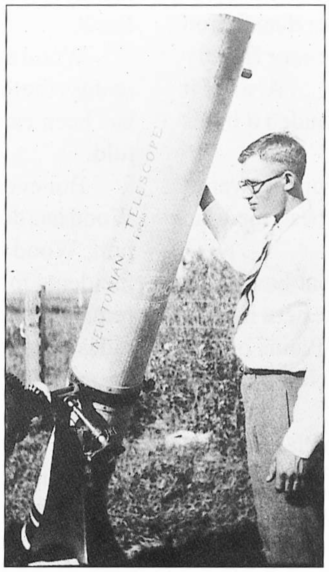
FUN AND GAMES IN THE DESERT NEAR LAS CRUCES

BY MICHAEL D. SWORDS

There is an uninteresting Project Blue Book record card that reads "25 Jan 54. Las Cruces, New Mexico. Blob of light which changed brightness. Was astronomical (Meteor)." That description doesn't sound promising or warrant further review.

But turn the page. There you will find a cover envelope stating that Clyde Tombaugh brought the case to the project. Hmmm. The best astronomical observer of his day, a man who could recognize meteors in his sleep, thought that a simple write-off meteor was worth sending to the UFO project? What would prompt him to do so?

Now Tombaugh wasn't the observer (although he had at least one UFO sighting, also in Las Cruces in 1949, and he also saw the famous green fireballs in New Mexico). The witnesses were two guys who worked with Tombaugh. Someone (perhaps Tombaugh) convinced one of the observers to write up the report, which then follows in the case file.


Clyde Tombaugh

The reporter (last name Schaldach, but we'll call him Observer 1) was a civilian employee in the Technical Service Unit at White Sands Proving Grounds. The service he provided was camera monitoring of missile launches, so he was no random Joe who just happened to see a meteor in the sky. He was a graduate of Columbia University, had worked as an astronomer at the Lowell Observatory (no, astronomers never see UFOs), and was a temporary faculty member for the University of Chicago at the Yerkes Observatory. A meteor . . . hmmm again. Something doesn't fit again.

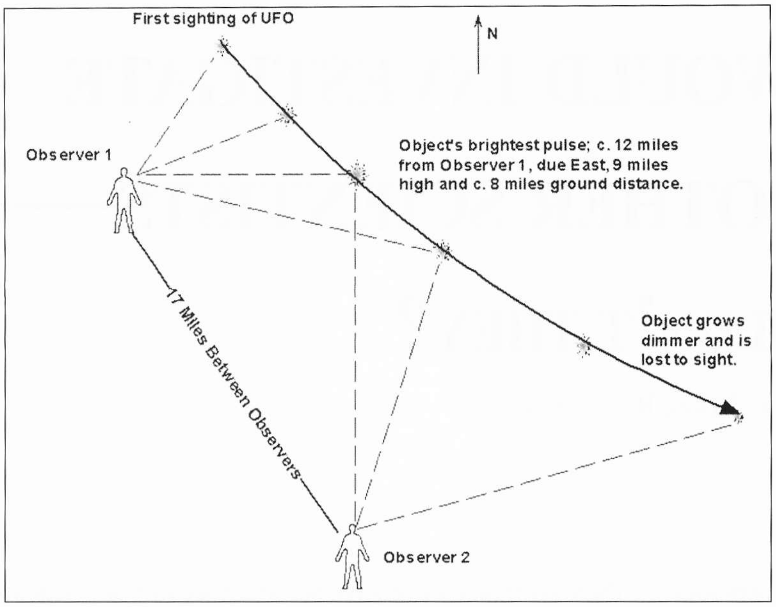
THE SIGHTING

It was 10 o'clock in the evening when he was setting up his ballistic camera to monitor the missile. Seventeen miles southeast of him the second witness (Observer 2) was doing the same thing (see diagram on the next page). The night was relatively clear and they were looking at the stars to see if the clarity was sufficient to calibrate their instruments.

Observer 1 saw the moving light in the northeast, Observer 2 in the north-northwest. For Observer 1, the light moved in a shallow arc from the northeast to the southeast. From the view of Observer 2, it was from the north-northwest to approximately east. The light was star-like, a "yellow-white radiation curve," similar to the stellar classification G0 (on the Harvard scale; this is close to the Sun's classification as G2). The light was visible to Observer 1 for about 6 seconds and it pulsed at about 1½-second intervals. Its relative brightness varied from less than magnitude 6 to greater than –1 (for comparison, magnitude 6 is barely visible to the naked eye while the upper value is characteristic of a bright planet such as Jupiter). The two observers communicated to one another by intercom and compared notes.

Their comparison allowed them to make a rough calculation of the light's distance and speed. Even given 25% slop in their estimates, the report turned in by Observer 1 concluded that the object was about 12 miles away at the time of its brightest pulse [and thereby about 9 miles high, in a rough calculation by this author, not the observers]. The velocity was 12,000 mph. Putting in error bars, the object was 12±3 miles distant and moving at 12,000±3,000 mph. This was a good faith try at obtaining what Ed Ruppelt always wanted for Blue Book: triangulated data.

Tombaugh would naturally have learned about this case since he lived in Las Cruces and would have been interested in everything unusual sailing around in the heavens. When Observer 1 told him that he was absolutely certain that this was no kind of meteor, which he states emphatically *twice* in the Air Force report form, Tombaugh would be pretty certain that we had a UFO on our hands. After all, these were trained observers, with one being an astronomer. Moreover,


First sighting of UFO
N
Observer 1
Object's brightest pulse; c. 12 miles from Observer 1, due East, 9 miles high and c. 8 miles ground distance.
Object grows dimmer and is lost to sight.
17 Miles Between Observers
Observer 2

meteors don't appear visible at a low altitude without putting on a much more extensive light show, as Tombaugh knew. As Observer 1 stated in his concluding remark on the form, "I have observed many thousands of meteors and can definitely state that this object was not any kind of meteor."

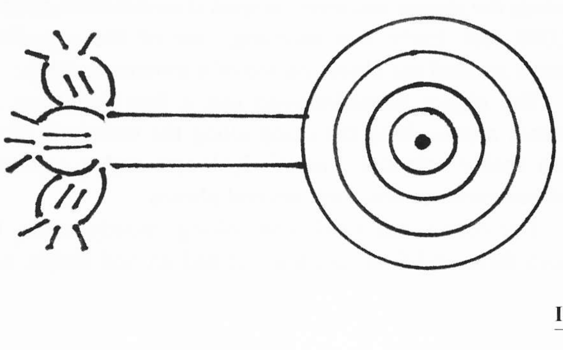
So, how on the great green Earth could the record card state, "Was astronomical (Meteor)"? You old hands at ufology already know, don't you? On that same envelope which mentioned that the case came from Clyde Tombaugh was penciled in: "Hold for return to Dr. Hynek." Allen, you were a very bad boy indeed in 1954, and I don't care if the Robertson Panel *was* just one year earlier.

WAIT, THERE'S MORE

But, maybe the Las Cruces story wasn't quite over. You can be the judge of this next story.

There is no case report on the material which follows, but there are newspaper clippings which give a feeling that *some* report must have been completed, somewhere, for some agency.

In the *El Paso Times* of February 7–9, 1954, three short news stories appeared. Two married women (Mrs. Weiss and Mrs. Sanders) who enjoyed rock-hounding were on one of their "girls-day-out" excursions to a place called Kilbourne Hole, about 25 miles west of Las Cruces. There, on more than one of these trips in the latter half of January, they came upon peculiar tracks in the desert sand. There were more than two dozen of these marks, apparently strung out in a "series."



The marks were peculiar, to say the least. Concentric circles cut into the ground with a raised center point, an "arm" extending from the circles terminated by marks made by three or four claw-like "hands." The circles were described as "perfect," and varied between 1½ to 3 feet in diameter for the largest one. Circles seen on one trip were wind-eroded on another, but a new set appeared fresh on a third visit.

Mrs. Weiss was moved to tell the newspaper, while Mrs. Sanders reported to White Sands. The two investigators from White Sands went out with the ladies and saw the marks themselves. It was reported that the tracks just suddenly began and suddenly stopped with no other markings of any sort leading to them or away. The White Sands guys, Caption Ross Orcutt and Henry Herman (described as a CID agent), went back to the base without comment. The ladies were left with the impression that these were the marks of "some alien object."

My overactive imagination wonders if there was not someone at White Sands who knew that something unexplained was making marks in the desert near Las Cruces in late January 1954, and that on the evening of the 27th, two camera scientists had seen an odd pulsing "non-meteor" flying at 12,000 mph going east. All, probably, very uncomfortable for the old paradigm, and, maybe, too, for national security. Still, as we've seen, J. Allen Hynek most likely had the answer. Everyone now: Breathe deeply and relax.

Editor's note: Too late for these observers, Hynek considered this case to be a good one, and he had it on his "10" list of unexplained observations by astronomers, according to Richard Hall. Allen was not averse to changing his mind, for better or worse. ✦

IS OUR SUN A BINARY STAR?

The Binary Research Institute has found that orbital characteristics of the trans-Neptunian planetoid 90377 Sedna demonstrate the possibility that our sun might be part of a binary star system. Sedna, first detected in 2003 by Cal Tech astronomer Michael Brown, provides what could be indirect physical evidence of a solar companion. Matching the recent findings by Brown, showing that Sedna moves in a highly unusual elliptical orbit, Walter Cruttenden at BRI has determined that Sedna moves in resonance with previously published orbital data for a hypothetical companion star. In the May 2006 issue of *Discover,* Brown stated: "Sedna shouldn't be there. There's no way to put Sedna where it is. It never comes close enough to be affected by the sun, but it never goes far enough away from the sun to be affected by other stars."
—Binary Research Institute, April 24.

SCIENTISTS WOULD INVESTIGATE SIGHTINGS BY OTHER SCIENTISTS—WOULDN'T THEY?

BY MARK RODEGHIER

Over the years, one of the common contentions of UFO skeptics is that, if UFOs really appeared as frequently as public sightings imply, then science would already know about UFOs. The simple reasoning is that UFOs appearing so often would have been detected many times over by various scientific instruments, but since UFOs have seemingly not been detected by scientific gear or various monitoring systems, then there must be nothing to the phenomenon.

There are various approaches to refute this argument. We can point to radar detections, theodolite observations, or even sightings by scientists themselves. There is plenty of this type of evidence to demonstrate that scientists do see and record UFOs.

There is, though, another way to deal with this skeptical claim. Science makes amazing advances literally every day, and so we can easily forget how little is known about the world around us. Astronomers and physicists are growing ever more confident in their knowledge of the development of the cosmos from the moments after the Big Bang until today, including the recent discovery of the mysterious dark energy. Meanwhile, biological scientists learn more and more about the human genome and how our bodies function, leading to mind-boggling advances in medicine. The pace and scope of scientific knowledge is impressive on all fronts.

But how much do we really know about phenomena that we observe every day or that affect us directly? Oftentimes not much, according to Robert B. Laughlin, Nobel Prize winner in physics, and professor at Stanford University. He has written the fascinating book, *A Different Universe: Reinventing Physics from the Bottom Down* (2005, Basic Books), which argues that the world is dominated by emergent properties (such as the properties of a solid, which are different than those of its individual atoms and molecules). There are things we observe but which we still can't calculate or even predict. Thus, as Laughlin notes, "Ordinary water ice displays, at last count . . . eleven distinct crystalline phases, not one of which was correctly predicted from first principles."

Laughlin's point is that things that we know to be true by simple observation may have profound and deep theoretical underpinnings that are not obvious or a consequence of other well-known physical laws, or of the properties of their constituents. He describes in his book why physicists often reject theories based on emergent properties for philosophical and social reasons (background training, existing research agendas, etc.), not for solid scientific motives.

Scientists are often prone to ignore both theories and data that they don't believe could occur or think are very unlikely because they contradict other well-established data and theories. This is generally a good strategy, but the approach fails when something important goes unrecognized and thus unstudied. And that is the fate suffered by UFO sightings, even from scientists.

INDIAN SCIENTISTS SEE UFO

As some of you may have read, on September 27, 2004, a group of Indian scientists from the Indian Space Research Organization saw a strange object in the Samudra Tapu glacier region in Himachal Pradesh state. The team of glaciologists and geologists were on a week-long expedition to study the glacier and were camped at an elevation of about 17,000 feet. Early that morning, one of the expedition porters spotted the object on top of a mountain ridge.

The object floated/moved just a few feet from the ground, approaching the camp along the mountain slope. Both senior scientist Anil V. Kulkarni and a coworker grabbed cameras and took several photos.

The object was small and oblong, mostly white, between three and four feet high. It had an odd shape, with

---

Mark Rodeghier is scientific director of the J. Allen Hynek Center for UFO Studies.

appendages and a cylindrical head with two balloon-type attachments. It eventually came within 50 meters of the scientists, hovered motionless for a few seconds, and then started a steep ascent. It rose high into the sky, hovering and appearing as only a white dot in the bright sunlight.

The photographs demonstrate beyond doubt that the scientists saw something that morning, and that they accurately reported what was observed. As geologist Rajesh Kalia said, "It didn't look like a man-made object."

The scientists, being cautious and believing that what they saw had to be man-made, contacted various institutes to check about balloon launches, and also to see whether the object could have been an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), many of which are used by the military. However, there are no balloons that match the shape of the object (and its behavior was not exactly balloon-like), and there are no known UAVs that match the object's shape, either. The object moved against the wind, making a balloon explanation even more improbable.

It is possible, of course, that the object was a super-sophisticated UAV being flown by the U.S. military that got off track. The sighting location is in the far northwest of India, and although it is not hard by the border with Pakistan, it isn't that distant. It is also near Kashmir, the site of much fighting between Pakistan and Indian, along with terrorism from separatist movements. But the object didn't have the aerodynamic shape of a UAV, and it wasn't making any noise from an engine.

As of this writing, the object remains unidentified, despite the best efforts of the expedition's scientists, who would like to know what they saw.

A FAILURE OF SCIENCE?

Outside of the expedition members and their immediate colleagues, it is fair to say that worldwide scientific interest in this intriguing sighting has been, well, nonexistent. Kulkarni has not been invited to present a paper about the sighting at a scientific meeting, new expeditions have not been planned to observe the object again, photoanalysts have not been clamoring for the original negatives to do image enhancement, and intensive efforts have not been underway to find the terrestrial object that might have been the cause of the report.

Here we have a UFO sighting, in daylight, by scientists. The object was photographed at a range that makes this a close encounter case. The witness descriptions are consistent. Although there is no physical evidence itself, the case otherwise would seem to be the type that we dream about, but it has aroused zero enthusiasm.

Admittedly, the sighting was not published in a peer-reviewed journal. (How could it be?) The object was not large, nor disc-shaped or triangular. It didn't zip away at incredible speeds, or disappear instantly. Nor were there unusual physical effects on any equipment, or the witnesses. And certainly no sign of life was seen in the small object. So the object, whatever it was, doesn't exactly cry out for an extraterrestrial explanation.

But by any reasonable definition, the object is a UFO, and the report does demand *some* explanation, which doesn't seem too probable at this point. So if this sighting doesn't get scientists interested, are we doomed to never attract the serious attention of the scientific community?

The short answer is: Yes, we just might be doomed, unless things change drastically with the phenomenon. But is this a failure of science? Or to put it differently, why should science be interested in this sighting? When the question is posed that way, it might seem that the answer is obvious: to learn something new about the world. Looking at it from another angle, though, reveals the practical hurdles the study of UFOs faces among academics and professionals.

We shouldn't speak of science in the abstract, but of scientists. And we shouldn't refer abstractly to scientists, but to scientists in specific fields. So let's list a few: biochemistry, geology, psychology, environmental sciences, zoology, astronomy, mathematics, and anthropology. Then ask yourself: What would be intriguing about this sighting to someone in one of these fields? What about this sighting would be worth studying because it might lead to an advance in one of these fields?

Put that way, the answer becomes instantly obvious. There isn't anything about the encounter—the object or its behavior—that has direct links to any of these subjects, and most any other one that we could name. Studying this report will probably not advance the research program in these fields. This is certainly true if the object was an exotic UAV; if it were something even more exotic (an alien craft?), it still wouldn't contribute unless we could get our hands on the device itself, or the intelligences behind it (exoanthropology, anyone?).

Certainly, academics or professionals in one of these fields may be intrigued by the sighting and want to study it. But if so, they won't be doing it to advance their fields (and definitely not their careers!). They will be investigating it because of the intrinsic fascination of UFO reports and what may be revealed about the universe or other intelligences. That's absolutely good motivation, but it's not discipline-specific incentive. And therein lies the rub. If scientists don't have a professional reason to investigate a report, it's a little hard to blame them for not investigating it.

None of this is meant to absolve certain scientists, such as Donald Menzel, Carl Sagan, or Edward Condon, of their share of guilt in ignorantly and willfully dismissing UFO sightings and UFO investigations as a waste of time. If a scientist does look at the UFO evidence but then not treat it honestly, we can feel cheated, and we are all the poorer, including science. And there have been equally intriguing sightings by scientists that have been ignored that *do* more strongly suggest ETI as a source.

Nevertheless, we shouldn't be disappointed or surprised when scientists don't leap to the study of the UFO phenomenon from their labs and computers. People need incentives to break away from their routines. Somewhat amazingly, UFO sightings, even by fellow scientists, don't give the average scientist an incentive to work professionally on the problem.

So just what *would* cause a scientist to study UFOs? It's the same thing that gets many members of the public excited about UFOs—having their own sighting. Even then, there's no guarantee that someone will take action, but it's usually the best predictor of continuing interest, if nothing else. ✦

ASTRONOMERS—*continued from page 16*

same trap that the general public does: that UFOs can mean only one thing—visitors from remote regions of space. If we hold, as we do at the Center, that a UFO phenomenon exists, then certainly the amateur astronomers have observed the UFO phenomenon, and by no means necessarily craft from outer space.

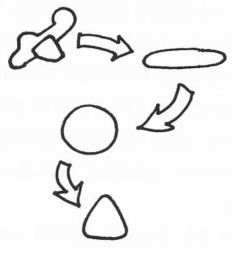
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

It is worth mentioning that CUFOS and other UFO groups continue to receive UFO sightings from amateur astronomers. A summary of recent sightings by these observers would be a welcome addition to the UFO literature and strong evidence that unexplained things are indeed observed in the skies. ✦

GRASSROOTS UFOS: CASE REPORTS FROM THE TIMMERMAN FILES

GrassRootsUFOs

Thousands of interviews recorded at 92 CUFOS UFO exhibit locations distilled to 406 unexplained, often amazing, sightings from everyday people across the globe, from Nova Scotia to the island of Guam. A softcover book with 250 pages, including detailed sketches and photos from these never-before-recorded experiences.



Send $22 by check or money order, for U.S. media mail (add $5 for surface mail to all overseas addresses), to:

CUFOS
2457 W. Peterson
Chicago, IL 60659

BOOK REVIEWS—*continued from page 19*

photographed had been so difficult to read that Berliner had not made a copy of it. When it was printed, here, according to Wood, was the document control page. This was a point that argued for authenticity.

Another objection was that the manual, dated 1954, mentioned Area 51, but Area 51 didn't exist in 1954. Wood said that his research showed that the beginning of the facility was in 1951. Okay, as far as it goes, but there is no evidence that the term, Area 51, was in use in 1954. This is a push, as they say in Nevada. Neither side has an advantage.

Wood, in his argument for authenticity, wrote, "All these claims of fakery have led me to create a summary list of phony claims of fakery. . . ." He implies that just because the government says they are fake documents doesn't make it so. That archives can't locate them doesn't mean they don't exist.

And I would have to agree with these points. Just because the government says they are faked doesn't make it so. And if the documents were as highly classified as alleged, it's not surprising that they aren't located by document searches. They simply wouldn't be filed in locations that are open to public scrutiny.

But there is one point that Wood makes that doesn't work. He puts the statement, "There is no provenance," on his list of phony claims of fakery. Sorry, the lack of provenance on the manual for the MJ-12 documents, all of the documents, is a real problem. In all the searching that has been done, no one has located a document that refers to, is part of, or suggests in anyway that a committee named MJ-12 has ever existed. This simply does not wash.

However, this book does pretty much what it set out to do. It provides a perspective of the MJ-12 documents and why both Robert and Ryan Wood believe the documents to be authentic. It addresses the claims that there is no physical evidence by enumerating nearly a hundred cases of claimed recovery of some sort of debris or material. Granted, many of them are fairly weak, but then, only one has to be authentic for the case to be made.

Yes, I disagree with some of the ratings and the value of some of the cases, but then, those ratings are subjective. Some information that the Woods find persuasive, I find less than convincing. Some information I find persuasive, they find less than convincing. When dealing with this subject, that isn't all that surprising.

For those who are interested in completing a library of UFO books, this is a necessity. It gives a look at MJ-12, the recovery of alien artifacts, and an overview, though limited, of this state of research.

But it must be remembered that the book was written by a true believer and there are points when I believe the standards for accepting evidence should have been higher. But we can say that in many UFO cases and about many UFO books. —*Kevin D. Randle* ✦

LETTERS

KECKSBURG CONTROVERSY

To the editor:

In Leslie Kean's article about Kecksburg ("Forty Years of Secrecy: NASA, the Military, and the 1965 Kecksburg Crash," *IUR* 30:1), she boasts that in 2003 there were "two exciting developments" which "demolish" the two skeptical explanations: a meteor or a Soviet satellite.

The satellite explanation, specifically Cosmos 96, has actually been a central explanation offered by the promoters of a mysterious crash recovery, such as Stan Gordon, since the 1980s. It's strange that this failed explanation has suddenly been declared a "preferred explanation" of the skeptics.

As for the meteor explanation, Kean never discussed it at all, except to dismiss without explanation the "amateur photographs," some of which were taken by a professional Michigan newspaper photographer, and the many 1965 eyewitness reports.

Most curious is her dismissing, without discussion, the explanation of astronomers who analyzed photographs, eyewitness reports, and a seismometer recording, published four decades ago in a peer-reviewed science journal.

Kean uses nothing more than the claimed eyewitness accounts decades later of tree damage seen in the dark at a site a half mile from the real search on another farm, but published by mistake in a local newspaper. For decades, as "new" witnesses surfaced with their strange accounts, this remained the only published location for the event. Furthermore, if you pick two trees, of course you get a "path" between them. But how many other trees were examined for damage in this heavily eroded, reforested area?

Kean ignored a lot in her article. Like Kecksburg mystery mongers before her, she makes much of an excited 1965 radio report by the late John Murphy, but curiously ignores the part where he said the only military people he actually saw at the site were in the back seat of a police car. These were obviously the three USAF men mentioned in the Project Blue Book file in the National Archives.

Also, Kean doesn't inform her readers of another tidbit John Murphy reported in the program, which was rebroadcast on WJM radio on the 1995 anniversary of the incident. He reported that the military present were from the "Army 662nd Radar Squadron." So, a week after the incident Murphy was still confused about the true identity of the military unit involved. This Air Force unit was located on the Army facility at Oakdale. Confusion about this is why, in 1965 and later, some people think the Army was there.

Kean disingenuously says that her investigation has established that personnel from this Army facility were present, but doesn't inform her readers that this is where the USAF 662nd Squadron radar site was located. She prefers instead to promote a continued mystery about Army "stubbornness" because they can't come up with non-existent documents.

Of course, as Kean writes, John Murphy thought he saw "Army" and "Air Force" uniforms at the police barracks back in Greensburg. He probably couldn't tell the difference between the winter blues worn by the Lieutenant and the OD fatigues, festooned with Air Defense patches, worn by the EMs. The details of the report that this newsman made, in his own lifetime, support the official version of events.

The most interesting revelation in Kean's article was that her group's investigation managed to locate several members of the USAF 662nd Radar Squadron who participated in the events of that night. Guess what they reported? Their 40-year-old memories also support the official version.

Until the long-published photographs are discussed for the support or refutation they offer to the a crash theory, the real Kecksburg crashed saucer cover-up of pictures and documents proving the true nature of the December 9, 1965, fireball will continue.

Readers shouldn't get too excited about these new developments, as they don't really offer anything new. The old farmers out there still chuckle when they talk about "Murphy's UFO": the burning pile of brush at the Norvelt Golf Course construction site, where the intrepid newsman first thought he had his "War of the Worlds."

Robert R. Young
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

The author responds:

Anyone familiar with the basic strategy of UFO debunkers is aware that their first rule is to deny any evidence that contradicts their position. In the Kecksburg case, scores of people, including representatives of the press, attest to the presence of military personnel at the search location, and a number of witnesses describe standing within a few feet of the object, half embedded in a gulley. Nevertheless, amateur astronomer Robert Young is so smitten with his belief that the incident was merely a meteor flyover that he is forced to insist that every witness who recalls details not matching this scenario is either wrong, unreliable or lying. When Young was asked for his opinion by *Philadelphia Inquirer* reporter Ralph Vigoda in 2000, he explained away the entire Kecksburg case as nothing more than "urban rumor." A rumor, even though scores of witnesses have given independent, first-hand testimony to what they saw? And the incident occurred in a remote, rural location. It appears that Young is not always careful about his choice of words.

Mr. Young is entitled to defend the Air Force position if he wants, but I would be interested to know how many of the key Kecksburg witnesses he has personally interviewed, if any. Has he spoken to Robert Gatty and Ernie Hoffman, reporters who were on the scene and were clearly capable of determining the Army presence? Or to Jerry Betters, Bill Bulebush, or James Romansky, whose independent reports of close encounters with the object on the ground corroborate each others' descriptions?

For many years, Young has doled out all manner of distortions and factual inaccuracies about the Kecksburg case to defend his one-pointed opinion. Take this rather amusing statement, for example, as reported in the same *Philadelphia Inquirer* piece:

"And to those who say the object floated, slowed down or changed direction, there's this explanation: People were watching the bright vapor trail, which was likely buffeted by winds."

This defies logic when one examines the detailed descriptions by witnesses, such as Randy Overly of the acorn-shaped object a few hundred feet above the ground. The many others from Westmoreland County who reported the incident described either a fireball, or a physical object, sometimes with a fiery tail. The notion of "vapor buffeted by the wind" as an explanation for the object's turns rivals any number of the more absurd explanations offered by desperate debunkers over the years.

Another example can be found at the beginning of Young's letter, where he declares that the Cosmos 96 argument was not used by skeptics, but was promoted by Stan Gordon (who has been investigating the case for 40 years). Young must be aware that the leading skeptic on the Kecksburg case, James Oberg, has actually been the loudest voice claiming that it was either the Cosmos 96 capsule or other debris from the failed Soviet probe that landed in Kecksburg. Oberg has been interviewed for numerous documentaries stating that this is what the witnesses saw—case closed. (Recently, however, it seems Oberg's position has changed due to Nicholas Johnson's findings; see more below.) Gordon, on the other hand, simply offered this explanation as one of many possibilities in an unsolved case.

These nit-picky, often irrelevant misstatements are characteristic of Young's repeated diatribes debunking the Kecksburg case. (His convoluted statement that I have used only accounts of "tree damage seen in the dark" one-half mile from the "real search" to determine the location is another example; we know where the correct site is due to three witnesses, unknown to each other, who escorted Stan Gordon there independently, as described in my piece. The tree damage was observed in broad daylight the day after the incident by witness John Hayes, and was photographed by Gordon years later.)

What's important to address here is the bottom line. There are three basic positions that have been put forward to explain the Kecksburg incident: (1) A meteor, meaning that nothing came down; (2) a man-made object so sensitive that its retrieval was covered up; (3) an object of unknown origin retrieved by the military and also covered up.

The first option, which Young believes to be true, requires that its proponents dismiss out of hand the testimony of dozens of eyewitnesses and some media coverage. My *IUR* article went into detail about the credibility of the Kecksburg witnesses and the large number of corroborating reports. However, in working with Stan Gordon for the last few years, I have learned that the *majority* of the witnesses he has spoken with over four decades have not gone public, and that there is actually a great deal more information in support of options two and three than Young or anyone else is aware of, some of it from highly sensitive sources. This is a statement I don't like to make because promises of confidentiality preclude its verification. Young's assertions, however, beg the question.

As waves of witnesses came forward at different times, Gordon was careful to withhold certain details about the case to use as checks for witness authenticity. There is absolutely no way that any serious investigator can dismiss the abundance of evidence showing the likelihood that *something* did indeed come down in Kecksburg on December 9, 1965.

Nonetheless, thousands in four states did see a brilliant fireball minutes before anything happened in Kecksburg. At the time this was assumed to be a meteor, yet today scientists disagree as to the nature of that fireball, and how it actually behaved.

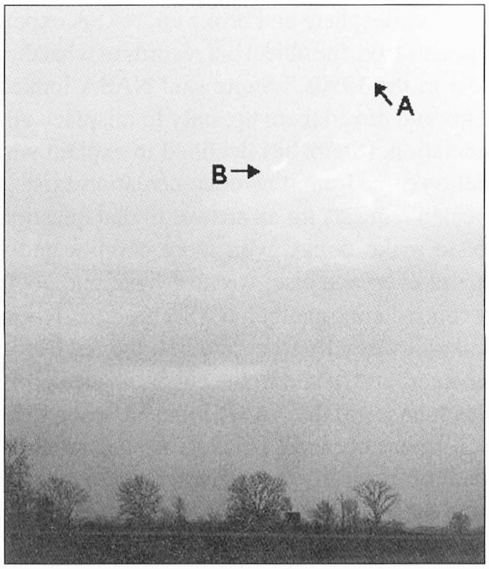
Over the years, Young's argument has hinged on a 1967 paper by astronomers Von Del Chamberlain and David J. Krause published in the *Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada*. "The Fireball of December 9, 1965—Part I" provides the authors' calculation of the trajectory of the fireball, which they state was a meteor.

In the paper, Chamberlain and Krause used triangulation of two photographs, taken a few miles apart in Michigan, to purportedly show that the trajectory for the fireball was such that it would have been at a right angle to a trajectory bringing the object into the Kecksburg area. The astronomers collected 66 standardized forms completed by eyewitnesses, including the accounts of the two photographers. Based on these reports, they estimated the event lasted only about four seconds and resulted in the explosion of the meteorite over the western end of Lake Erie near Detroit. (Interestingly, the authors note, "several observers reported that some material apparently continued beyond, along the original trajectory.") The paper stated that the event occurred at 4:43 p.m. EST, based on nearby seismographic records of a shock wave produced by the fireball.

Although this study includes three interesting images of the fireball's smoke trail, Young does not seem to be aware of the meticulous work of scientist David Rudiak exposing the problems plaguing the study. Rudiak provided a brief summary of his findings for me in a recent email (greater detail and helpful illustrations are on his website, www.roswellproof.com/Keckburg_triangulation_error.html).

1. The *JRASC* article assumes absolute precision in measuring triangulation angles to two "points" in the fireball trail. This is unscientific methodology, as there is always some error in any measurement, and there is no error analysis in the article.

2. The two triangulation "points" should actually be large, fuzzy areas with boundaries determined by the possible



One photo from the JRASC paper used to triangulate the trajectory of the December 9, 1965, fireball. The photo was taken about 20 miles north of Detroit and shows the smoke trail just after the fireball disappeared following an explosion, shown by the puff of smoke at Point B.

measurement errors. Instead of one line between two precise points, the paper should have presented a broad range of possible trajectories within the range of these error regions.

3. Small angle errors in determining directions to the two smoke trail points of only ±0.6° (or 1.2° overall) would be sufficient to change the trajectory by nearly 90° from the one suggested, allowing for a trajectory towards Kecksburg.

4. Errors are *easy* to make when measuring in the field. Sources of such potential errors could have been: getting compass directions slightly wrong; not precisely locating one or both photo locations to within inches (smoke trail directions can only be determined relative to nearby objects, such as trees, so precise location of photo sites is vital); a small scaling error in one or both photos; trail drift due to wind, since the two photos were taken half a minute to a minute apart, shifting the smoke trail points between photos and thus changing the apparent trajectory. (In fact, scrutiny of the three included photos shows clear evidence of such high winds.)

5. That the trajectory is likely in error is strongly supported by the photos themselves, clearly showing that the smoke trail gets thinner over time. The most likely explanation is that the object was moving sharply *away* from the camera rather than sideways, as stated in the article. (If it were actually sideways, the trail should remain constant in overall thickness since the distance to the camera would remain unchanged.) Estimating the thinning of the trail results in a trajectory at least towards Kecksburg or even more to the southeast.

6. This away-from-camera trajectory also results in a calculated angle of descent that is gradual (much like an airliner coming in for a landing) rather than the steep (52°) calculated descent angle of the article. This gradual descent is also consistent with a Kecksburg landing over 200 miles away.

7. The Pittsburgh Airport time of 4:47 p.m. for the fireball (vs. about 4:43 p.m. in Detroit) calls into question the meteor fireball explanation. This would be too slow for a meteor, which should have traveled the distance in less than a minute.

In addition, sonic boom reports from western Pennsylvania, phoned in to various agencies, confirm the presence of the fireball over that state.

What was this fireball, which looked like a meteor, and what was its relationship to events in Kecksburg? Could there have been two separate events, a meteor and something else unrelated that came down in Kecksburg? Or could the fireball have sent off something—just before it exploded in the "puff" captured on film—that ended up grounded in Kecksburg? Or, did the fireball itself, being something other than a meteor, make a gradual descent into Kecksburg? This is part of the mystery that we will probably never solve, unless the U.S. government comes clean about the case.

What we *do know*, according to Stan Gordon's interviews with many people in local communities who saw a fiery slow-moving object, is the very specific trajectory of something unusual descending over Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. Beginning at about 4:47 p.m., a luminous object was first seen over the greater Pittsburgh area as news media and police phones were inundated with sighting reports. (Or was this simply those pesky vapor trails buffeted by the winds?) The brilliant object then moved towards the southeast and passed over Greensburg, made a turn to the south, and headed towards the Laurelville area. After making another turn, it traveled northeast towards Kecksburg, where it turned again and descended into the woods. The news media reported that the Army and State Police cordoned off the area where the object was believed to have landed. "Nothing that happened earlier in four other states will change these facts," Gordon points out.

New information is coming to light all the time about the Kecksburg event. Recently, Gordon obtained a newspaper article from the *Mount Pleasant Journal* published on December 17, 1965, eight days after the incident. Despite reporting that the state police captain said that nothing was found and "we're satisfied it was meteor," the headline reads, "Mystery Surrounds Area's Fallen Object—Many Questions Still Unanswered." The story states, "seven area residents reported seeing a smoldering object crash to the earth." It goes on to say that Army personnel were supposedly among those sealing off the roads in the area, where up to 400 "curious onlookers" had gathered. "Why have U.S. Army officials hastened to the scene issued no statement on the results of their search? And why, with reported sightings from many other areas, were so many officials concentrated on the search here?" queries the article.

This story also notes, as has been confirmed by other sources, that the search for the object continued the following day (Friday). If it was determined early that morning, as the Air Force stated, that nothing came down and this was only a meteor, why did the search continue? "By Friday evening, the area had been thoroughly scoured by police, military authorities, scientists with Geiger counters and other volunteers," the story states.

Young writes that the "most interesting revelation" of my story was the reports of several members of the Air Force 662nd Radar Squadron who were involved with events that night. Young states that these reports support the official position that nothing came down. Indeed, one lieutenant did say that he searched for the object and found nothing. However, in the same interview, he also contradicted what we know about the circumstances at the site from numerous news reports describing the extensive military and police presence, the cordoning off of the area, and the many civilians descending on the location. As I mentioned in my article, this lieutenant said there was no military or police presence on the roads or in the area, and no excess civilian activity. The latter observation is simply impossible, and raises numerous interesting questions that I explored in my story.

Young may delight in the fact that this man said nothing was found, but he has chosen to disregard the rest of his interview, which involved puzzling inconsistencies with the facts, and therefore calls into question the reliability of the lieutenant's story. The lieutenant's official written report about his search was for some reason not included with the Project Blue Book files, and has not yet been released by the Air Force, despite my specific requests for it accompanied by an affidavit from the lieutenant.

Other discrepancies exist in the various rather convoluted stories reported to me by the 662nd officers: In one case, an officer said that he's positive no search was conducted at all, and yet another officer told me he's convinced that the object was a Russian satellite. Both of these statements actually *contradict* the official version, rather than support it, as Young claims. Young has chosen to select from these accounts one part of one story that fits his predetermined belief that the incident involved only a meteor, while ignoring everything else. This selectivity is to be expected—picking the evidence to suit his position and ignoring the rest is the name of the game.

And Young's interest in this set of witness interviews raises another question: He has chosen to accept *contradictory* reports of a few former Air Force officers with "40-year-old memories," while rejecting dozens of *corroborating* reports from other independent witnesses. Does this make sense?

One final note: The official position that Young so staunchly defends has recently been challenged not by a mere journalist or UFO investigator, but by a U.S. government agency. NASA, which reportedly had a role in the incident but has not provided information about the case through the Freedom of Information Act, is now contradicting the Air Force findings. Unexpectedly, last December, NASA spokesperson David Steitz told the Associated Press that "the object appeared to be a Russian satellite that reentered the atmosphere and broke up. NASA experts studied fragments from the object but records of what they found were lost in the 1990s." Steitz said NASA looked at the fragments and boxed them up, only to misplace all related documentation. (Steitz has declined to explain where this information came from if no documentation exists, despite my repeated requests for an answer to that question.)

So, to make things even more complicated for Mr. Young and everyone else, we now have one government agency contradicting another. NASA headquarters in Washington says it was a Russian satellite; the Air Force says it was a meteor; and to add to the chaos, space debris expert Nicholas Johnson of the NASA Johnson Space Center says it couldn't possibly have been a Russian satellite or any man-made object at all, for that matter. And eyewitnesses on the scene say it was a strange acorn-shaped craft with illegible symbols on the outside. Which was it?

I have no idea why Young is on a mission to ridicule a large portion of the evidence on this case, without any regard to the accuracy of his statements in doing so, and why he so fanatically sticks to his particular belief about the incident. In the meantime, the fact is that we still have a real mystery on our hands, still unsolved and still under investigation.

Leslie Kean

DOCUMENTARY MEMORIES

To the editor:

I thoroughly enjoyed the Robert Barrow article on the movie: *Unidentified Flying Objects,* which I am fortunate enough to own. My lifelong interest in UFOs was probably born when I was a 10-year-old youngster and my mother took me to see this long-ignored movie. I can still remember the sense of awe and wonder that I experienced as I gazed upon the huge movie screen above me, totally enveloped by the introductory opening title: *Unidentified Flying Objects: The True Story of Flying Saucers* (shown in the upper right-hand corner of the last *IUR* cover). It absolutely captured the attention of that 10-year-old kid, who is now almost 60, and still fascinated by the subject of UFOs, and still entertained by this grand old black-and-white flick. My thanks to Robert Barrow!

Peter Resta
Arnold, Maryland

LOOKING FOR ARNOLD

To the editor:

I am trying to trace the daughter of the late Kenneth Arnold. I hope to make the definitive documentary on the late Kenneth Arnold and cement his rightful place in ufological history. His daughter is Kim Arnold Purvis.

If you know where I can contact Kim Purvis, or know of anyone who might be able to help me locate her, I would be grateful. Please write to me: Philip Mantle, 49 East Leigh Drive, Tingley, Near Wakefield, West Yorkshire, WF3 1PF England. E-mail: philip@mantle8353.fsworldco.uk.

Philip Mantle